



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6732nd meeting

Thursday, 8 March 2012, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Sir Mark Lyall Grant/Mr. Parham	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Germany	Mr. Berger
	Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Haroon
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2012/128)

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12-25487 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The question concerning Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2012/128)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Brazil, Canada, Chile, Haiti, Japan, Peru, Senegal, Spain and Uruguay to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Mariano Fernández, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/128, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fernández.

Mr. Fernández (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Sir, and the other members of the Security Council for having organized today's meeting, the purpose of which is to present to the Council the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2012/128).

I welcome today's opportunity to share with the Council an assessment of the most recent developments in the political and security situation in Haiti, and of the activities carried out by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) over the past six months in support of peacebuilding, political stability, the strengthening of the rule of law and recovery work after the earthquake of 12 January 2010.

I take this opportunity to welcome the presence of the Haitian ambassador.

I would like to start by quoting the speech President Michel Joseph Martelly delivered on 9 January on the occasion of the inauguration of the Haitian Parliament. In a moving speech, the President stated the following:

"Eight million Haitians, out of an estimated population of 10 million, live without electricity. Five million cannot read or write and are in the dark both day and night. Eight Haitians out of every 10 are living on less than \$2 a day. Two per cent of Haitians control 69 per cent of the country's wealth. With a working population that is put at 4.2 million, fewer than 200,000 have regular formal work. At least 84 per cent of university graduates live abroad."

I wish today to highlight the relevance of those words, which dramatically reflect and unambiguously confirm a situation that Council members were able to observe during their recent visit to Haiti a couple of weeks ago.

After the nearly eight years that MINUSTAH has been in Haiti, the results of peacebuilding and stabilization efforts are visible. However, the earthquake of 12 January 2010 was a serious setback caused by large-scale human and material losses, the traces of which Council members saw during their recent visit. In order to move forward in strengthening the rule of law, public security and the socio-economic sphere, a major effort of the entire international community has been necessary for Haiti's reconstruction and the recovery of its institutions, the re-engineering of its police security structure, and broad cooperation and aid to stimulate socio-economic development.

Our main goal is to ensure that present and future progress allows us to consolidate efforts to ensure stability and peace so that Haiti can overcome the situation described by President Martelly once and for all and so that the country can take off politically and socio-economically.

With regard to the current political situation, the report of the Secretary-General mentions the recent resignation of Prime Minister Garry Conille after only four months in office. His resignation was a worrying and telling sign of the state of the governability of Haiti. The credibility and strength of democratic

institutions depend on their ability to respond to political crises and to avoid negative cyclical situations, the majority of which are artificial, that threaten Haiti's progress towards democracy.

As noted by the Council during its visit, throughout our mission we have emphasized the importance of avoiding such Government crises and of reducing disputes between the executive and legislative branches. Avoiding such unproductive conflicts must be part of an ongoing effort to improve the quality of Haitian politics. The main problem is the severe difficulty encountered by the political class in achieving collective agreements that would allow consensus to strengthen institutions and public action. We have therefore stressed the need for a pact for democratic governance that would facilitate consensus and provide solutions for Haiti's main political problems. We have worked for all of society: members of Parliament, political parties, unions, employers, the church and representatives of civil society.

Today the President put forward a candidate for Prime Minister — the current Foreign Minister, Laurent Lamothe, who must be approved by Parliament. MINUSTAH is working in earnest to ensure that Haiti can soon again have a Government. The times when there has been no Prime Minister and no Cabinet in Haiti have seen a rise in insecurity and a clear decline in governability, with obvious negative repercussions for development. We are therefore working with Parliament and the Government to achieve the appointment of a Prime Minister as soon as possible.

As to the rule of law and security, without solid rule of law institutions and an agreement on governability, it will be difficult if not impossible to lay a firm foundation for peace and security for all Haitians. Despite the slow pace, after five years Haiti finally has a fully staffed Supreme Court. The Court had no President or members for five years. No democratic judicial system can work without an independent and self-regulating judiciary. This progress is very significant when we consider all that has occurred in Haiti.

The Security Council's visit provided members with a snapshot, as it were, that was in many instances quite upsetting. For us, however, it is more like watching a film that allows us to discern some progress. I stress the establishment of the Supreme

Court because it is extremely important — moving towards the rule of law. We have worked to strengthen the rule of law and institutions, not just conceptually but physically. MINUSTAH has built 50 courthouses to ensure the effective provision of justice, and will build another 30 to complement its support for the judicial system in Haiti.

Another fundamental pillar of the rule of law — apart from the judiciary, on which we continue to work — is the main instrument of the rule of law, namely, the police force. In this regard, we have been working for quite some time now, and I can assure the Council that, over the past six months, the MINUSTAH police, together with the Haitian National Police (HNP), has carried out 21,000 patrols and more than 31,000 actions in camps for refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Port-au-Prince and the provinces. Alongside the military component of MINUSTAH, the HNP has conducted operations to disband criminal gangs that posed one of the most serious challenges to stability in Haiti.

Although the response of the police to security challenges has improved, much remains to be done. Our current task is to remove the obstacles to better police action and to strengthen the Haitian National Police. Today, the HNP numbers 10,000, which is nearly three times as many as in 2004. However, for a country of 10 million people, it is still insufficient. Together with the international community, MINUSTAH has developed a support programme to ensure that, by 2016 — the last year of President Martelly's term in office — we will have provided professional training to 5,000 or 6,000 officials to endow Haiti with a significant Police force, thereby enabling a MINUSTAH drawdown by the end of that period. In the context of this five-year programme, we convened a special seminar between the Police and the international community in order to consider, assess and improve the efforts under way to ensure that the outcome will be highly positive.

As is noted in the most recent and important Security Council resolution 2012 (2011) on Haiti, the reduction of the military and police components of MINUSTAH is to be completed by June, pursuant to the Secretary-General's reports and the resolutions of the Council. This has not affected security, and we have had an effective redeployment of forces. We have maintained the staffing levels of the United Nations police. There are fewer soldiers and former police

units, but the same number of United Nations police, which remains unchanged. We trust that this will continue to be the case, given its important cooperation with the Haitian National Police.

Political violence has virtually disappeared. Ordinary crime — principally murders — is relatively low compared to other countries in the Caribbean and Central America. However, very serious challenges remain in ensuring security for the most vulnerable sectors, in particular with regard to domestic violence and the abuse of women. In order to be more effective against such crimes, we have increased patrols, trained police officers, set up solar-powered street lighting, and patrolled 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the main IDP camps. Today, 8 March, International Women's Day, I wish once again to affirm MINUSTAH's commitment to countering gender-based abuse and to contributing to the promotion of Haitian women in their daily lives and in their professional and civic roles.

Another problem affecting the rule of law and security is the emergence of illegal military forces in the wake of programmatic campaign statements made by President Martelly concerning the restoration of the Haitian army dissolved in 1995. MINUSTAH and the international community have clearly told the Government that, without prejudice to the sovereignty of Haitian institutions, they will not lend support to such forces. We believe and have reiterated that illegal armed forces are unacceptable. The Government responded to our demands in a communiqué issued on 3 March, containing a five-point plan to regularize the situation. The measures proposed include prohibiting the use of military uniforms and weapons, reviewing the pensions received by retired military personnel, ensuring the smooth conduct of this process, and liberating those areas occupied by the military.

Yesterday, the Haitian Government convened an important meeting with MINUSTAH, seeking cooperation in putting an end to this issue once and for all. We asked the Government to formally declare the illegality of these groups and to proceed to identify retired military personnel who are owed pensions in order to distinguish them from the young people who are participating in such activities due to lack of employment. We are ready to assist and to mitigate the unnecessary tensions that these activities are raising.

The Government has said that it wants Haiti to be open to business, and we have said that in this regard words must be followed by deeds. The Government has yet to address the issues of constitutional reform, elections, the creation of a land registry and a civil identification registry, a constitutional tribunal and a law on political parties. As I have mentioned, the Government has already completed some of those tasks, such as with regard to the Supreme Court, and has announced the upcoming establishment this month of the Superior Council of the judiciary, which will be responsible for discipline in the judicial system. All of that represents a significant step forward.

We have said that Haiti must hold elections soon. The elections that were scheduled for November did not take place. We have told the President that he has a historic opportunity to organize transparent and irreproachable elections, with the assistance of the international community. We have also said that successful elections could serve to strengthen the socio-political consensus; conversely, delayed, contested or postponed elections will without a doubt undermine the efforts to promote the image of a stable and dynamic country looking towards the future.

Last week, the President invited the entire diplomatic corps accredited to Haiti to a meeting intended to launch the electoral process. We view that as a positive sign. MINUSTAH, which is serving as the international community's focal point, will this week meet with Haitian technical experts in order to prepare pre-election steps.

A few moments ago, I said that MINUSTAH believes that it is essential for there to be a Government in Haiti. In the past, when there has been a President but no Cabinet or Prime Minister, violence has increased and economic development has fallen off. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) projected that there would be 10 per cent economic growth in Haiti during 2011. But five months without a Government meant that, in the end, growth would only be 4.5 per cent. ECLAC projects 8 per cent growth in 2012, which, in the midst of the economic crisis, is quite high. We have no doubt that, if the President continues to be without a Government, growth in Haiti will decrease, resulting in serious harm to the Haitian people. That is yet another reason that we are working hard to ensure that the Haitian President can soon count on a Prime Minister and that the State can function normally. That will help

to reduce violence and will improve economic results, as has been shown in various situations that we have studied.

Major efforts have been made with regard to human rights, correctional matters and humanitarian issues. The Council, which had an opportunity to visit prisons and camps, knows first-hand what is taking place. We are making strenuous efforts in order to make significant progress in this area. In recent months, our team of lawyers has succeeded in securing the release of 230 people who had been imprisoned without trial for many years. There is similar success with regard to prisons. We are working to improve conditions for prisoners and are contributing materially to building prisons in Haiti.

Last September, we announced that displaced persons still included 634,000 victims of the earthquake. However, that figure represented only a third of the original 1,800,000. We can today say that the number of displaced persons at the end of January stood at 515,000, a reduction of 120,000 since September. In our view, those are positive statistics, as those reductions have made it possible to identify new populations and resources and to abandon certain sites where habitation is increasingly difficult owing to a reduction in international assistance with regard to food, sanitation and supplies necessary for camp living.

I would like to say that those efforts by MINUSTAH, which include many positive aspects, are marred by the moral attributions that Haitian society attach to the effects of the cholera epidemic, which has resulted in more than 7,000 deaths, as well as the sexual abuse committed by military and police personnel members of our force. I personally believe that there can be no immunity with regard to crimes committed against minors, such as rape. I support a fair trial that includes protections for the rights of the accused. But they must be carried out in a transparent manner and include penalties adequate to the severity of the crimes. And there must be a lifetime ban against those convicted working with the United Nations, as the moral values intrinsic in peacekeeping operations are what gains them respect throughout the world. It is both an honour and a privilege to be part of them, both for individuals and for the countries that contribute personnel for the noble task of contributing to defending peace in any part of the world where there is a need.

In conclusion, I believe that we have an arduous task before us in Haiti. However, there is no denying, from the impression that I have developed during the eight months that I have been in my post, that this is a slow process that includes certain reversals but that, in the end, produces a degree of stabilization vis-à-vis living conditions, political activity, economic development and attention to social issues. Some things in Haiti are a matter of history, including the risk of authoritarianism and a winner-takes-all situation. But today there is also a process wherein the President is learning to work with the Parliament and vice versa. Between them, with the assistance of the international community, institutions are being built for the rule of law in a way that, slowly, a legal order is being put in place that is much more acceptable today than it was three to five years ago.

The President: I thank Mr. Fernández for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fernández for his briefing.

As Council members saw on our recent trip, and as the report (S/2012/128) of the Secretary-General makes clear, Haiti's stands at a moment of decision. In the two years since the earthquake, Haiti has made progress. Haitians have strengthened their democracy, maintained security and begun rebuilding their shattered country. But serious problems remain, most notably a lack of Haitian political consensus and resolve. The achievements that have been made are fragile at best. The United States stands in solidarity with the Haitian people as they tackle the many challenges that face them. We will continue to be firmly committed to helping Haiti build a better future.

Over the past two years, we have seen a peaceful electoral process and transfer of power, followed by the filling of key executive and judicial positions. Today, however, the political stalemate threatens those hard-won gains. Haiti's politicians need to temper their partisan interests, put aside winner-take-all politics and work together in a spirit of compromise. We urge the authorities in Haiti to confirm a new Prime Minister as soon as possible. Otherwise, they risk undermining the gains made in the areas of security and reconstruction.

Haiti cannot afford further gridlock. Effective Haitian leadership is critical. The economic and security programmes supported by the United Nations and other external partners do not run themselves. They require policy guidance from a fully functioning Haitian Government. Towards that end, the Government needs to hold the next round of elections for local Government positions and one third of the Senate as soon as possible.

While the security situation has been largely stable, significant threats remain. The United States believes that any determination of the future size of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) forces must be based on security conditions on the ground, including the ability of the Haitian National Police (HNP) to take on greater responsibilities.

That said, MINUSTAH cannot be a permanent solution to Haiti's security needs. The Government of Haiti's next budget proposal to Parliament provides a critical opportunity to commit the resources and demonstrate the political determination needed to strengthen the Haitian National Police so that it has the right quality and quantity of personnel to assume full responsibility for Haiti's security. That is what Haitians have told us they want. We urge the Parliament and executive branch to commit sufficient and lasting budgetary resources to the HNP, in particular to strengthen the administrative and logistical systems that will enable the HNP to function on its own.

The international community, of course, is there to help. The United States urges the United Nations and the Haitian Government to maintain their focus on strengthening the HNP. We hope that MINUSTAH and the HNP will work jointly to implement a development plan that bolsters the HNP's capacity to meet Haiti's law enforcement needs and that enables the gradual transfer of responsibility from United Nations forces to the HNP.

United Nations training and police mentoring can deliver important results, and United Nations technical assistance can truly help the HNP to plan its future. The Government of Haiti announced an ambitious goal of training 2,000 new HNP officers this year. Close collaboration between the HNP and MINUSTAH is necessary to achieve this target.

Beyond the HNP, we encourage the Government of Haiti and the United Nations to collaborate in

strengthening other rule of law institutions, including courts and prisons. We urge the United Nations to work collaboratively with the Haitian presidential commission on the rule of law to present the updated criminal code and criminal procedure codes to Parliament. Those updated codes will help address the issue of prolonged pre-trial detention and reduce corruption in the legal system. As we saw ourselves, prison overcrowding remains a grave problem — one where MINUSTAH and Government of Haiti collaboration can yield real benefits. Haiti and its international partners have built a new prison at Croix des Bouquets, but the prison is unutilized because the Haitian Government has avoided making some key decisions that would enable the prison to open.

Turning to economic development, we applaud the Government's desire to shift Haiti away from dependence on international assistance to reliance on investment to create jobs and spark sustainable economic growth. But for now, political friction and weak rule of law institutions may in fact deter investors from coming to Haiti. The executive branch needs to fulfil its commitment to reducing the time it takes to register a business and to easing the processes for obtaining permits in the construction industry. Both would help empower Haitian entrepreneurs. Getting those reforms through Parliament would send a clear signal that Haiti is indeed open for business and determined to create jobs.

The Government of Haiti needs to set clear reconstruction and development priorities and work more actively with donors. When the mandate for the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission ended, the Prime Minister's office became the focal point for working with international donors on post-earthquake reconstruction and creating economic opportunities. That office, of course, is now in the hands of a caretaker and the reconstruction effort risks losing direction.

Let me close with a few words about MINUSTAH. The United States greatly appreciates the dedicated service of the men and women of MINUSTAH. They perform important services under difficult conditions. However, we are and remain deeply concerned by serious accusations that some MINUSTAH personnel have engaged in sexual exploitation and abuse. Any occurrence of such misconduct is absolutely unacceptable. It violates the principles of the Organization and destroys the bonds

of trust between Haitians and the United Nations. The United Nations must increase its efforts to prevent any incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse. It must ensure that all allegations are thoroughly investigated and that those responsible are held fully and transparently accountable.

When the Council visited Haiti, many Haitians told us of their appreciation for all that MINUSTAH has done over the years to improve the country's security. The United States shares this gratitude and will continue to support MINUSTAH, its troop- and police-contributors and its Haitian partners in this crucial work.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the United Kingdom for convening this debate on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). We also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report, (S/2012/128) and his Special Representative, Mr. Fernández, for his briefing.

Azerbaijan commends the efforts undertaken by the Government and people of Haiti to achieve stability and sustainable growth in the country. MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team have also played an important role in supporting the recovery and stability of Haiti.

At the same time, as we witnessed during the recent visit of the Council to Haiti and as the report of the Secretary-General makes clear, more should be done by the national authorities and the international community in the broader interests of the Haitian people. Political stability in the country is a key priority for the stabilization and development of Haiti. It is important that all political leaders responsibly approach and engage in constructive political dialogue to address their differences in a spirit of compromise. We encourage MINUSTAH to continue facilitating political dialogue among the branches of Government and other key political actors. As Haiti approaches its elections, the United Nations should further support the electoral process.

We note with satisfaction that the overall security situation has been relatively stable in recent months and that the politically motivated violence has significantly diminished. However, the high crime rate remains a matter of serious concern. Therefore, the continued close cooperation between the Haitian National Police and MINUSTAH is vital to effectively

addressing the security challenges and to ensuring that the former move towards reaching the capacity necessary to handle full responsibility for the provision of internal security. It is also important that the Haitian National Police not only react to criminal acts but also undertake preventive measures, including through public information and education programmes for youth and vulnerable groups. The development of border security is also critical to addressing the challenges of organized criminality.

The humanitarian situation in Haiti has shown improvement as the number of people living in tents has declined. However, the country continues to face significant challenges, with more than 1 million Haitians remaining in camps and many others continuing to lack access to housing and basic services. Strong international engagement is crucial to ensuring that all pressing humanitarian needs are met. At the same time, external assistance and support do not release the Haitian authorities from carrying out their responsibilities in providing at least basic services, housing and protection to those still displaced by the earthquake.

We are confident that, against the background of unprecedented international support, Haiti and its people have an opportunity to make genuine progress in rebuilding the nation, strengthening institutions and promoting sustainable development.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mariano Fernández, for his briefing. I align myself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union and the representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Group of Friends.

This biannual debate comes just a few weeks after the Security Council visit to Haiti. That visit allowed us to reaffirm our collective support to the Haitian population and its representatives. That support is combined with recognition of the progress made since the earthquake, be it in terms of the 119,000 Haitian refugees who have been able to leave camps since June 2011, or as it pertains to the removal of debris. I bear in mind the numerous humanitarian challenges that the country continues to face, which were mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2012/128). For its part, France is determined to deliver on the commitments undertaken by its

President, which now total €326 million, including our share of European aid.

However, the challenges facing Haiti today require the mobilization of the international community and of all the Haitian leaders. In Port-au-Prince we saw how the current level of tensions — aggravated since the Council's return by the resignation of Prime Minister Garry Conille — is such that it is impeding the regular functioning of institutions and risking generating unrest within the population. That situation is all the more unfortunate since, on the other hand, certain progress has been made at the institutional level. The police are increasingly visible and respected. The President and Vice-President of the Superior Council of the Judiciary have finally been nominated. An encouraging sign in the struggle against impunity is that those responsible for the massacre that took place in Les Cayes prison in January 2010 have been brought to justice.

Finally, as the Secretary-General's report notes, the security situation is relatively stable, although still fragile. To continue its stabilization and reconstruction efforts, the international community needs political stability. It needs an established Government. It also needs coordination on the part of donors, as such coordination is no longer carried out by the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission since October 2011. The foreign investment requested by President Martelly also requires political stability.

We would therefore remind the Haitian authorities of their responsibilities to the people who elected them. We expect them to set a date for interim local and legislative elections, adopt a budget, swiftly promulgate the constitutional amendments with guarantees for the President, establish a permanent electoral council, appoint a Prime Minister and respect a truce between the executive and the legislature. We also call on President Martelly to take all the steps necessary to halt the grouping of armed men claiming to be former members of the Haitian armed forces.

MINUSTAH has been deployed in Haiti for eight years. It is responsible for maintaining order and stability and support to the Haitian police. It has gradually strengthened the capacities of the Haitian National Police, which today numbers 10,000 men. It has several highly professional civilian and military staff that have been provided by troop-contributing

countries. And we provide it with significant resources every year for it to carry out its mission.

At the same time, however, it is well known that the task of the peacekeeping operation is not to remain indefinitely in Haiti to maintain order or to carry out reconstruction and development. It is therefore important to have a clear idea of what we want to achieve and by when.

During the years of presence in Haiti, the Missions that have accumulated via mandates, the inexcusable conduct of certain elements deployed in Haiti and the tragedy of the cholera outbreak have tainted our image in the eyes of Haitians. We can regret that but certainly not ignore it; just as we cannot ignore the will expressed by some Haitians to see the departure of MINUSTAH one day.

After the tragedy of the earthquake, we decided urgently to increase the MINUSTAH contingent. Today, what we must do is to pursue the dual movement of drawdown and adaptation set out in resolution 2012 (2011), taking into account, of course, the conditions on the ground.

We must refocus MINUSTAH's efforts on police training and improving the rule of law. To do that, we need to improve the balance within the Mission among troops, police and civilians. Although outbreaks of violence are still possible, the basic tendency is towards an improved security situation that will enable a significant reduction in MINUSTAH's overall strength.

The status quo and the current drawdown are both fraught with instability and tension. Because the United Nations presence in Haiti is viewed in the long term and we want MINUSTAH to be the last peacekeeping operation deployed in Haiti, we want the Mission to evolve in a gradual, responsible manner towards a withdrawal in good conditions.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, first of all, to welcome and thank Mr. Mariano Fernández, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, for his briefing and for his introduction of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2012/128) before the Council today. I would also like to thank him for the welcome and guidance that he provided to Council members during our recent visit to Haiti. In that regard, I also welcome the briefing on 28 February (S/PV.6724) by Ambassador Susan Rice,

which presented the opinions and analysis of all Council members.

The purpose of the Council's visit was to reassert its commitment to help and support the Haitian people in building peace, stability, democratic governance and the rule of law, as well as in promoting recovery and sustainable development.

Given the report of the Secretary-General and the meetings and visits carried out during the Council's mission, I should like to make several comments. First, we were able to witness first-hand the weak political relations between the Executive and the Parliament, the challenges and expectations as well as the increased divisions, which, as we know, led to the resignation of the Prime Minister a few days after our visit.

We learned subsequently that President Martelly had proposed to Parliament that his Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Laurent Lamothe, become the new Prime Minister. We trust that the problem will be resolved in line with a settled political environment that will enable all political persuasions to join together for the good of the nation in addressing the major challenges facing the nation. In that respect, all possible assistance must be welcomed, and provided to those endeavouring to bring about national unity, if we are asked for such help. The Secretary-General and Special Representative Fernández should also continue to strengthen efforts to that end.

Secondly, it is only right to acknowledge that the country, under the helm of the President, has started to deal with the major challenges of education, job creation and the protection of the environment. But much remains to be done. I am very concerned about the reference made by the Director of the World Food Programme to the risk of the school meals programme in Haiti coming to an end in June, due to a lack of funding. It would be shameful for that to happen, given that 1 million children partake of those daily meals — a fact that has indirectly enabled them to remain at school. They can expect to rely on international support to continue that programme. Given that situation, the programme requires food and financial aid, as well as support at meetings of the Organization aimed at preserving the programme.

The third aspect I wish to address has to do with the relationship between the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and the Haitian people, referred to in detail by Mr. Fernández.

While the efforts of MINUSTAH are acknowledged — as we ourselves personally witnessed, as in the case of the work of the military engineers on reconstruction and damage repair, as well as on security — there is concern with regard to the reports of violence and sexual abuse on the part of some members of the Mission and the alleged responsibility for the introduction of the cholera epidemic.

In that regard, we must reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to ensure the achievement of its zero-tolerance policy in the context of sexual abuse related to its peacekeeping operations and the commitment to investigate and punish such conduct, as well as the positive attitude of Governments in the investigation of such cases. Situations of this kind cannot continue to occur within MINUSTAH, or in any other United Nations mission. The Security Council must be absolutely firm on this issue. We fully support the remarks of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in that regard.

As far as we are concerned, given the stated need to re-establish the Haitian army as a key element in MINUSTAH's eventual withdrawal, which will have to take place, although that remains a sovereign matter for each country, we must nonetheless bear in mind the importance of ensuring that the process encompasses the necessary reform, strengthening and consolidation of the Haitian police as a viable, safe force capable of providing stability and security. While security during the period covered in the Secretary-General's report was relatively stable and fragile — and the figures we were offered today show significant progress — MINUSTAH's work in that context remains vital. Any reduction in numbers must not discount that important vision in the future.

Two other important aspects that I would like to emphasize concern the judicial system and correctional issues. In our view, the lack of across-the-board institutionality creates difficulties in access to prompt justice, which in turn gives rise to disputes and conflicts among groups of the population. The same may be said of the Court of Cassation, which should be the guarantor of last resort in judicial proceedings. We need to reinforce international efforts to consolidate a broader, more robust presence of the judicial system, including more humane prisons, which we have seen are overcrowded and in precarious condition.

With the dissolution of the Provisional Electoral Council last December, it will no longer be possible to hold the elections originally scheduled for ay. We therefore urge the Government to swiftly establish an electoral authority that will guarantee the timely issue of a schedule allowing the population to express its views through a democratic process.

Last but not least, we are concerned that, despite the considerable efforts of the Haitian people and the international community, the impact of the earthquake is still clearly visible in the streets and buildings, revealing the magnitude of the damage. It is also evident in the refugee camps, where more than 500,000 people are still living in 700 separate locations, the majority of them on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. International support, including that of MINUSTAH's corps of engineers, should be maintained to enable them to surmount their precarious living conditions and to offer new alternatives for living.

As a final word of conclusion, I would like to emphasize the importance and necessity of achieving solid institutionality and the rule of law, which are essential conditions for advancing on the path towards economic and social prosperity and for guaranteeing the security of the Haitian people.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all, Sir, to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mariano Fernández, for his presentation, and to congratulate the entire team of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for their efforts on the ground. I would also like, through their Permanent Representative, who is here today, to convey my thanks to the Haitian authorities for organizing and hosting the Council's visit.

A little more than two years after the catastrophe that struck Haiti, the joint efforts of the Government, donors, the United Nations and the population have brought improvements to the overall situation of the country. Indeed, as we saw, Haiti is making its long way back. We also witnessed close-up the extent of the damage and the scope of the challenges that lie ahead. But no one can question the progress made by the Haitian authorities in enabling their country to recover from the aftermath of the earthquake, or the relevance of the initiatives taken to improve the security situation and regenerate the economy and the social fabric of Haiti.

We hope that the establishment of a new Government will help to ensure greater unity of Governmental action and lead to a national consensus on long-awaited major reforms. Morocco hails the efforts of the Haitian authorities to promote the reforms under way, including those concerning the Permanent Electoral Council, the Supreme Court and the signing of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Those reforms deserve to be fully implemented and should be complemented by measures to strengthen the rule of law in all its dimensions.

We particularly commend the improvements in the security situation and MINUSTAH's decisive contribution to maintaining a stable environment. We observed not only the Haitian people's aptitude but also their pride in being able to take responsibility for their own national security by their own means.

With respect to the process of recovery and development, huge challenges remain despite the rebuilding efforts undertaken by the Government and MINUSTAH, and also despite the notable progress made in terms of clean-up and the reconstruction of schools and housing. The problem of employment, especially for young people, is easy for any visitor to see. Young people deserve the priority attention of the Government and the support of the international community. Improving the climate for foreign investment is critical in that regard, in order to attract, reassure and encourage investors from abroad.

The day after the earthquake of January 2010, the response of the international community was one of spontaneous, unanimous and generous solidarity and assistance. It made all the difference in comforting the Haitian people. From the outset, the United Nations, through MINUSTAH, played an early and decisive role. Nothing, and I repeat, nothing can tarnish the sacrifices that the Mission has made or the devotion and integrity of the thousands of men and women who compose its ranks.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal) (*spoke in French*): I would like at the outset to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Mariano Fernández, for his most useful report (S/2012/128), which reminds us of the progress that has been made but above all also of the immensity of the task that remains to be accomplished.

I welcome the presence in the Chamber of our Haitian colleague, Ambassador Jean Cazeau. Like other colleagues, I thank him for all the support his Government provided to our recent visit to Haiti. We naturally share the perspective that will be presented later in this meeting on behalf of the European Union.

Today's discussion naturally concerns not only the activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), but also the situation in Haiti and its challenges: security, reconstruction, economic and social development, functioning institutions and strengthened rule of law, as well as the defence and promotion of human rights, all in a context affected by very considerable obstacles, as we have just heard and as we recently saw for ourselves.

Indeed, the Haitian people and authorities face the particularly daunting challenge of building a working democracy in a context of weakened security, widespread shortages of basic goods, generalized suffering and specific problems with respect to economic and social development. This is not, unfortunately, an entirely unprecedented situation. In order to confront it, however, and to overcome the challenges, the first requirement is political stability, clearly defined goals, determination and effective cooperation among the institutions that were legitimized by the democratic election. The resignation of Prime Minister Conille a mere four months after his appointment is naturally cause for increased concern, since it affects the normal functioning of national institutions and the accomplishment of critical and urgent tasks. My delegation has full confidence in the sense of responsibility of Haitian officials and in their commitment to democratic values and practice, the reconstruction of the country and a democratic State. We call on them to act accordingly.

Security has long been a central issue in Haiti. Despite being strengthening, the Haitian National Police it is still not in the position to enforce law and order throughout the country. That is why MINUSTAH still has an important role to play in this sphere, even in the context of the progressive drawdown of its personnel. Nevertheless, the drawdown to the level of January 2010 must take place without reducing capacities of the MINUSTAH police and the Haitian National Police.

It is evident that ensuring security and peace in Haiti is first and foremost the responsibility of the

Haitian people and authorities. The international community does not want to substitute for the national authorities and can act only in support of the stabilization and development that Haiti itself carries out.

During the recent Security Council visit, the issue of training a Haitian national army was raised. We know that the question was discussed during the electoral campaign and studied at the national level. Naturally, we do not question the right of Haiti's independent and sovereign State to an army. The question is rather to determine whether this is the right moment to allocate and spend significant material and human resources on a project whose effective contribution to resolving the serious and urgent problems that Haiti faces remains unclear. That is why we call on the Government of Haiti to act to ensure that the issue is broadly and transparently discussed, allowing conclusions anchored in reality.

The humanitarian situation and the protection of human rights remain causes of concern for us. The marginalization of particularly vulnerable groups, the significant number of internally displaced persons and gender violence are a problem for us. We congratulate MINUSTAH on its work with UNICEF and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to harmonize the law on human trafficking with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, ratified by Haiti in 2009.

The Secretary-General's report also voices concerns regarding impunity. The efforts carried out by the Haitian authorities and MINUSTAH are commendable, but we believe that additional efforts, above all the in the cases specifically highlighted in the report, will still be necessary in the key area of consolidating the rule of law.

In conclusion, MINUSTAH is adapting to new human and material conditions in order to fulfil its mandate in a difficult and sometimes adverse environment. It is sometimes the object of denigration the basis for which cannot be objectively determined. This increases the pressure on MINUSTAH officials, international partners and the Haitian authorities. It is important that we be able to continue giving our solidarity to the Haitian people and to MINUSTAH,

which is clearly committed to its mission. For our part, this unwavering support cannot be called into question. Allow me also to assure the Ambassador of Haiti of the continued support of Portugal for the stability, reconstruction and development of his country.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2012/128) and welcome his Special Representative, Mr. Mariano Fernández, to New York. We commend him for his endeavours.

For many years, we have followed the evolving situation in Haiti and have been a formal stakeholder, given our participation in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) as a troop contributor. However, this is our first statement on the matter as a member of the Security Council.

Haiti, of course, faces many challenges, which were only compounded by the legacy of the horrific earthquake of January 2010. Addressing those challenges requires a comprehensive approach, but today I would like to focus on three areas of special concern.

First is the matter of political stability. The year 2012 began with promise. On 9 January, we were encouraged by President Martelly's pledge before Parliament, as he announced his priorities for the year, to seek close coordination with all branches of Government. Of particular importance was an agreement with the legislative branch regarding, among other aspects, the appointment of a Prime Minister.

Unfortunately, our optimism of some months ago has been mitigated by the recent resignation of the Prime Minister and the mounting tensions between the legislative and the executive branches. We therefore meet today as events continue to unfold in a context of greater political uncertainty, as outlined in paragraph 55 of the Secretary-General's report. Some slightly more encouraging aspects were indicated by Mr. Fernández.

Obviously, the absence of a duly constituted Government adversely impacts decision-making on key issues. At the same time, the experience of recent decades in Haiti has shown that the holding of elections and democratic governance, in accordance with the Constitution, are the only way to achieve long-term stability. Municipal elections and the

renewal of one-third of the Senate are now overdue, although we note the President's recent remarks that these elections are of high priority to his Administration. We trust that these will take place as soon as possible, especially since the Secretary-General's report reminds us that the outgoing Senators' terms expire in May.

I would also like to take a moment to comment on the status of the Provisional Electoral Council. Its temporary nature should not prevent the preservation of the know-how and technical capacity for future elections. In that respect, it would be worth considering the establishment of a permanent support office to this effect. On the other hand, if the idea of a permanent electoral council evolves, it is of utmost importance to guarantee its independence. At the same time, we invite the Government to begin engaging with MINUSTAH to take the logistical, operational and concrete measures necessary for the preparation for holding these elections.

The second area of concern is recovery and reconstruction efforts. I stress the importance of renewing the mandate of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission that expired last October. We believe that the added value of that mechanism is unique, not only for the donor community but in particular for Haiti. The Government is an essential player in attempts to rebuild a country. The Commission makes it easier to take the Haitian view as the basis of its proposals. We further believe that the public sector must be strengthened and that international assistance should take that carefully into account. The Commission offers a practical, transparent and inclusive solution to closing the gap between existing capacities and the unmet needs of the Haitian people. Although it is currently intended to be an interim commission, its establishment as a long-term institution should be considered so that the country has a national focal point through which to channel international assistance.

This brings me to the matter of the remaining internally displaced persons camps. We appreciate the 19 per cent reduction of the total number of persons in camps cited in the report. We also support enhanced efforts to protect vulnerable groups exposed to the cholera epidemic, food insecurity and gender-based violence, among other threats. However, we believe that more must be done to adopt a comprehensive camp closure plan and to find alternative long-term housing

and sites. We note that, on average, displaced persons in Africa spend well over a decade in temporary settlements. Unless this remains a priority, we risk replicating that distressing situation in Haiti.

The third concern is security, a subject to which my previous remarks were also related. It is now broadly acknowledged that security gains could be undermined by weak socio-economic development and governance and that, consequently, there is a need for a balanced approach to security and non-security considerations. The report before us reminds us of the important role that MINUSTAH fulfils in Haiti, particularly on the security front. It is understood that peacekeepers cannot remain in Haiti in perpetuity, but it is equally important not to abandon Haiti prematurely.

We look forward in the following months to receiving detailed information on the request made to the Secretary-General in paragraph 24 of resolution 2012 (2011) concerning a comprehensive assessment of threats to security in Haiti, including options, as appropriate, to reconfigure the composition of MINUSTAH.

Finally, we take note of paragraph 56 of the report and of the initial steps taken by the Government to contain the emergence of uniformed militias that are organized without official approval. These observations are also based on our recent visit to Haiti in February.

The international community, in particular the countries of Latin America and from the Caribbean, have a clear stake in Haiti's success and we fully commit to continuing to support the process of political, economic and social development. I recall that, while the international community is willing to play a supporting role, the primary responsibility rests first and foremost with the Haitians themselves.

Mr. Mashabane (South Africa): We would like to thank Mr. Mariano Fernández, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive statement. At the outset, we wish to express and reiterate our continued support for the United Nations efforts in Haiti.

Haiti has undergone significant change since its emergence from the devastating earthquake of January 2010 and the conflict. The country had to face the daunting task of reconstruction while at the same time

it had to deal with the challenges of governance and democracy. Despite these seemingly very difficult challenges, Haiti has made significant progress.

Towards the end of last year, we saw progress on the political front after the compromise between the President and Haiti's legislators that led to the swearing in of a new Government and the appointment of a Prime Minister. However, we are concerned that the strained relationship between the presidency and Parliament has paralysed progress towards developing a consensual legislative agenda and the adoption of the national budget, as well as progress relating to the upcoming elections.

The resignation of Prime Minister Conille should not be allowed to hamper any political progress achieved so far. We hope that the Haitians are able to reach consensus on all these outstanding issues. Stable governance is essential if the Haitian people are to lead efforts to rebuild their country. We encourage collaboration between the executive and legislative branches of the Government. A rapid resolution of this crisis will allow the Haitians and the international community to focus on the key challenges of development and the reconstruction of Haiti.

The Council has previously recognized the interconnected nature of the challenges facing Haiti. We reaffirm that security, institution-building — such as in the area of the rule of law — the consolidation of national government structures, democracy and development are mutually reinforcing.

The strengthening and capacity-building of the Haitian National Police is critical to ensuring stability in Haiti and to laying a firm basis for the withdrawal of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in the future. The Haitian Government, working with MINUSTAH, must identify critical capacity gaps within the police service and develop strategies to address them as soon as possible. Importantly, the promotion of the rule of law at all levels is critical to ensuring stability and to facilitating development in Haiti. In this regard, we also welcome President Martelly's appointment of the President and Vice-President of the Supreme Court, which further strengthens the rule of law institutions in the country.

We note from the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/128) that the overall security situation is stable. However, we are concerned over reports of the increased mobilization of several hundred armed

former members of the Haitian armed forces. We share the view expressed by the Secretary-General that this mobilization poses a threat to the stability of the country and that the Government should take necessary measures to address the issue.

South Africa commends MINUSTAH's military and police personnel, as well as the Haitian National Police, for their contribution to the improvement of the overall security situation in Haiti. While we welcome this positive development, we are mindful of the fragile stability of the situation, due to civil unrest related mainly to socio-economic grievances.

We hold the view that addressing these socio-economic challenges should be prioritized, as they also contribute to security and stability. Given the strong linkages between peace, stability and development, we welcome President Martelly's pronouncement of his Government's priorities, which include security, the resettlement of the displaced, job creation, environmental protection, health care, education and schools, among others.

The case of Haiti clearly illustrates the relationship between security and development. We note the positive contribution of MINUSTAH's engineering components and quick-impact projects to improving the lives of those most in need. These aspects of MINUSTAH's work help to establish conditions conducive to long-term reconstruction and recovery, and support the notion of peacekeepers as early peacebuilders.

My delegation welcomes the work done by MINUSTAH's Conduct and Discipline Unit to address the allegations of sexual misconduct by the Mission's personnel by strengthening prevention measures, accelerating disciplinary case management and taking remedial action, in line with the United Nations zero tolerance policy regarding misconduct by its personnel.

We recognize that Haiti continues to face humanitarian challenges. The cholera epidemic and food insecurity necessitate enhanced international assistance in Haiti. It is therefore incumbent on the international community to continue to support Haiti in its recovery from the humanitarian challenges it faces, without which the country will not be able to achieve stability and development.

South Africa is committed to assisting the people of Haiti. In addition to our bilateral assistance, South

Africa will continue to work with its partners in the India-Brazil-South Africa IBSA Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation.

In conclusion, Haiti has made significant strides towards peace and stability. Challenges remain and it is imperative that the Haitian people, with the sustained support of the international community, work with MINUSTAH to overcome all these obstacles.

Mr. Berger (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union. I thank the Secretary-General for his report and Special Representative Mariano Fernández for today's briefing.

At the outset, let me underscore our continued willingness to help and support the Haitian Government in its efforts to build a better life for its people. Since the earthquake Germany has, bilaterally and through the European Union, provided €146 million for reconstruction and €41 million for humanitarian assistance, apart from €230 million in private donations. At the same time, we wish to underline that the primary responsibility for recovery and reconstruction lies with the Government of Haiti.

Against that backdrop, we note with concern the continued stand-off between the executive and legislative authorities and the resulting state of blockage and inaction, which prevents Haiti's State institutions from delivering on promises made to their people. Haiti and the Haitians simply cannot afford to wait any longer for effective Government.

We join the Secretary-General in his call on all political actors in Haiti to engage in constructive political dialogue. Haiti's political leaders must work together in a spirit of compromise. A new, widely accepted Prime Minister must take office expeditiously. The appointment process must not again become the object of partisan infighting, but rather must be accomplished without delay in the best interests of the country.

Germany strongly encourages Special Representative Fernández in his efforts to advocate a political pact to advance the stabilization and development of Haiti. In that context, we cannot overemphasize enough the importance of the rule of law and good governance. A lack of political and legal certainty is a major impediment to development, including to increased foreign investment.

I would like to focus on three aspects, namely, the Haitian National Police, elections and human rights. First, we note the Secretary-General's assessment that

"the Haitian National Police is gradually improving, [but] ... the institution is not yet in a position to assume full responsibility for the provision of internal security." (S/2012/128, para. 11)

That indicates that political support of the Government in building the capacity of Haiti's National Police is key and must be enhanced. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) still has a crucial role to play in maintaining a secure environment and protecting human rights, including the fight against sexual and gender-based violence.

With the primary focus currently on enhancing policing capacity, the Council should consider further downsizing MINUSTAH's military capacities, in line with developments on the ground. Efforts aimed at enhancing the Haitian National Police should not be diluted by plans to reintroduce Haitian armed forces. In that context, we note with concern that armed groups consisting of former members of the Forces armées d'Haiti have resurfaced in several departments, and former army elements and new recruits were witnessed conducting training exercises throughout the country. Haiti's international partners have clearly indicated that they are not willing to fund any military in the country. Germany strongly shares that view.

Secondly, regarding elections, we urge the political leadership to take the steps necessary to avoid a continued institutional vacuum, in a timely manner, as discussed with representatives of the Security Council on 1 March in Port-au-Prince. In order to build confidence and trust, Germany encourages the Haitian leadership to invite external missions to observe the upcoming electoral processes. Haiti cannot afford to enter into another period of political stalemate — in a phase when the ability of the administration to act and govern is of the utmost importance.

Thirdly, Germany joins the Secretary-General in his call on Haiti's authorities to spare no effort in the fight against impunity. The establishment of accountability and of the rule of law remains a central benchmark for success. Accountability and the rule of law are not only of key importance in their own right, but they also help to create conditions for sustainable economic development. Strengthening the rule of law

is an investment that pays off. Capacity-building, including in the justice system and corrections facilities, must therefore remain a priority. Germany also underlines the importance of continued enforcement of the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on misconduct by its personnel, and appreciates the steps that have been taken so far, as outlined by the Special Representative. Indeed, that is important for the acceptance of all peacekeeping forces — not only in Haiti.

In conclusion, MINUSTAH remains a prerequisite for the stability and development of Haiti and for peace and security in the region. At the same time, it is evident that the agenda for MINUSTAH needs adjustments, streamlining and focus in line with developments on the ground. While Germany is open to discussions on the scope of MINUSTAH's mandate, we are of the opinion that civil reconstruction is best placed in the hands of specialized United Nations organizations dedicated to that task. Given the multifarious nature of MINUSTAH's mandate, the Council might also wish to look into ways of making the priorities among MINUSTAH's tasks clearer for all concerned.

Finally, I would like to join previous speakers in thanking all countries that have contributed troops to MINUSTAH and would like to extend sincere thanks to the personnel of the Mission in Haiti for their dedicated work.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mariano Fernández for his briefing.

With support and help from the international community, Haiti has recently been actively carrying out post-disaster reconstruction, taking forward the political process, scaling up its national security and building institutions, showing considerable progress — which deserves our recognition. We also note that Haiti is still faced with grave challenges ahead in maintaining stability and promoting development — calling for greater efforts on the part both of Haiti and the international community. I wish to underscore the following points.

First, political reconciliation is the key to the maintenance of peace and stability in Haiti. China is concerned by the current political situation in Haiti. We hope that the parties will seize the opportunity, strengthen unity, enhance mutual trust, settle disputes

through consultations, form a new Government as soon as possible and consolidate the hard-won gains.

Secondly, post-disaster reconstruction and development is the central task for Haiti. At present, recovery and reconstruction is slow. Problems such as poverty, unemployment, a weakened education system and poor infrastructure are so acute that they warrant great attention. The Haitian Government needs to be better able to bear the primary responsibility for development, improve governance, attract investment and create job opportunities. It is also our hope that the international community will fulfil its assistance commitments, improve the efficacy of its aid and provide constructive support to Haiti for its reconstruction and development.

Thirdly, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) is playing a significant role in maintaining peace and stability in Haiti. China thanks Special Representative Fernández and MINUSTAH for their efforts and their contribution to the maintenance of security and stability in Haiti, and it hopes that MINUSTAH will actively implement its Security Council mandate and complete its drawdown as scheduled, while continuing to assist in maintaining security and stability, taking forward the political process and strengthening the rule of law and institution-building.

Mr. Zhukov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Fernández for his briefing on the situation in Haiti and the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). We have listened with interest to the briefing and have taken note of the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/128), whose assessments we share. The Security Council's mission to Haiti has proven a significant resource for information.

Unfortunately, despite some stabilization, the situation in Haiti remains complex. We are concerned about political rivalry, including between the executive and legislative branches of the Government. We hope that the resignation of Prime Minister Conille will not lead to even greater political and social division. Regrettably, political upheavals have overshadowed the country's socio-economic recovery. The Government must take urgent steps to achieve national consensus and to unite society. It must assume leadership in tackling key tasks, in particular economic and

humanitarian issues. There should be no delay in adopting crucial decisions directly linked to the country's recovery. That applies to stepping up the constitutional process, the adoption of relevant laws and the implementation of reforms.

In that regard, questions have been raised over the announcement by the executive of tentative plans to re-establish the country's armed forces. We do not question the sovereign right of Haiti to independently take decisions on security sector reform, but while the key challenges are linked to the imperative for economic recovery and the need to combat crime and strengthen legality and the rule of law, the primary task in that regard should be improving the effectiveness of the National Police. We believe that the implementation of such plans, if they become a realistic possibility, can only increase political tension and cause concern among the international community, which is giving Haiti its firm support.

I would like to note MINUSTAH's significant contribution to stabilize the situation in the country, in particular its assistance towards maintaining security, establishing State institutions and enhancing the capacities of the national police in improving law and order. We are pleased that the reconfiguration of the Mission, in accordance with resolution 2012 (2011), is going according to plan. MINUSTAH must smoothly conclude the reform process under way and work within a new format, both quantitatively and qualitatively. We can then assess the effectiveness of the implementation of its mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter, and possibly consider additional measures.

With regard to the accusations of peacekeepers committing serious crimes, we think that exacerbating the negative atmosphere concerning the Mission's work would be counterproductive. Such incidents should be promptly and thoroughly investigated, with the involvement of the troop- and police-contributing countries. If certain troops are found to be guilty by the relevant national judicial bodies, they should definitely face punishment in line with the criminal legislation of the countries of which they are citizens. The Mission needs to focus on enhancing the degree of discipline and to do its utmost to prevent the recurrence of such cases. Only through actual acts can it repair the damage to its authority.

The international assistance given to Haiti, in which the United Nations plays a leading role, is unprecedented in terms of scale and solidarity. We believe that efforts to provide comprehensive assistance to Haiti, including for the strengthening of State authority structures, must continue so that the Haitians can independently tackle all issues in the areas of security and recovery and of ensuring sustainable national development.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): At the outset, I would like to join others in thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mariano Fernández for his comprehensive briefing on the recent developments in Haiti and for presenting the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2012/128).

Despite periods of political uncertainty and the resultant instability during the past year, Haiti has made a notable recovery from the devastating earthquake of January 2010. Today, there are fewer people living in camps than last year. More than 1 million people have been relocated so far. Several hundred schools have been rebuilt. Health services have improved. More than 100,000 temporary shelter units have been built to accommodate 400,000 affected persons. Emergency food assistance now covers 4 million Haitians, and 5 million cubic metres of debris have been removed. That would not have been possible without the strong commitment and support of the international community. We commend the role played by the United Nations and its agencies, as well as the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission.

The security situation has also improved, although it remains fragile and suffers from an insufficient policing capacity. Moreover, the country witnessed the peaceful transfer of power last year, which reflects the faith of the Haitian people in democracy. In December 2011, the International Monetary Fund noted that the economic situation in Haiti is improving, and it predicted positive gross domestic product growth for the year 2012.

Progress in recovery and reconstruction has, however, been slowed down due to the continuing political uncertainty in the aftermath of last year's elections. The delay in the formation of a Government for several months, the lack of understanding between two important organs of the Government and avoidable controversies are, unfortunately, affecting the overall

gains made on the recovery front. That has affected donor confidence, and the appeal of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was funded to the tune of only 55 per cent in 2011. The political infighting has also delayed the adoption of a number of legislative measures and preparations for elections to the Senate and local bodies appear stalled. The resignation of Prime Minister Conille last month has further exacerbated political tensions. We hope that the process of parliamentary approval for the new Prime Minister and the formation of a new Government will be completed soon.

The need of the hour is for the Haitian leaders to set aside their differences and to work collectively for an effective administration that can implement the reforms necessary for economic growth and strengthen the capacity of rule of law institutions. Political stability is fundamental to effective governance, which alone can stimulate development, investment and the confidence of the international community.

Given the prevailing situation, the role of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) continues to be critical to recovery efforts, to ensuring the overall security and stability and to the capacity-building of Haitian national institutions, particularly the national police. That will also help the national authorities deal with the reported emergence of new armed groups belonging to the disbanded army. We commend the leadership of MINUSTAH and its peacekeepers and engineers for doing excellent work in the most demanding circumstances. MINUSTAH has provided security for the distribution of humanitarian assistance to some 4.3 million Haitians and helped provide temporary shelter to 1.5 million people. Military engineering companies have played a significant role in removing rubble, repairing roads and setting up temporary shelters. MINUSTAH's important role in assisting the authorities to respond to the epidemic and the hurricane can hardly be overemphasized.

We hope that the Haitian national institutions will gradually assume a larger role and ultimately take over MINUSTAH's responsibilities. Against that backdrop, MINUSTAH should focus its efforts on supporting the political process, capacity-building and the consolidation of Haitian national institutions, including the national police force. The future force configuration of the Mission should be based on overall improvement of the security situation, as well

as stabilization of the political and socio-economic situations.

India has contributed three formed police units, totalling 458 personnel, to MINUSTAH. The performance of the Indian units has been widely appreciated in view of their exemplary dedication and devotion to duty. India also made a modest contribution to the efforts of the Haitian authorities to deal with the earthquake devastation in 2010. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, India made a cash contribution of \$5 million to the Government of Haiti towards relief measures as a token of our solidarity with the people of Haiti. India has also contributed \$500,000 every year since 2009 to the Central Emergency Response Fund, which continues to play an important role in the recovery work in Haiti. We have also undertaken a waste management project through a joint India-Brazil-South Africa initiative. In addition, India will soon undertake a project for the construction of low-cost housing units.

In conclusion, the continuing support of the international community, coupled with stable and effective governance, remains critical for sustainable peace, security, stability and development in Haiti. We remain committed to continuing our support for the efforts of the Haitian authorities to rebuild the country. It is our hope that Haiti will soon emerge from its current problems and move towards stability and development.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I would like first of all to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mariano Fernández for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) (S/2012/128). The report, it must be said, supports and adds to the observations made by members of the Security Council during the Council's mission to Haiti in February.

After the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010, the entire world wondered how the country would ever be able to recover. Fortunately, with the will and the determination of the people of Haiti and the support of the international community, the reconstruction of the country is on the right track. The measures that the Government is implementing in many areas to bring about the welfare of its people are aimed at that goal. They involve, inter alia, free schooling, the rehousing of those who lost their homes

in the disaster, and the establishment of a national programme to fight against hunger and malnutrition. We also note the adoption of other measures in the justice sector, in particular, such as the revision of the criminal code, the appointment of additional judges to the Court of Cassation and the announcement of the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary. Those measures are likely to reassert the authority of the State and enable the Haitian people to flourish, which is something that my country welcomes.

However, a feeling of satisfaction does not dispel our concern with regard to political, security and humanitarian problems that remain in the country. Politically, differences run deep, and the political will to resolve them appears to be lacking. The problems no doubt feed into the instability characterized recently by the resignation of Prime Minister Garry Conille, just four months after his appointment. Moreover, the lack of consensus, which is very perceptible between the executive and legislative branches, remains a source of major concern. These differences in viewpoints do not inspire confidence and are likely to undermine the efforts of the international community.

It is important that the authorities and all those involved in politics in Haiti work to find consensus on the major issues that divide them. In that regard, Togo wishes to invite them to follow the road of dialogue and compromise, overcome partisan differences and keep firmly on course for reconstruction and development in a climate of brotherhood, solidarity and shared responsibility.

With regard to security, which has always been a major challenge for the Governments of Haiti, it is encouraging to note that there has been some improvement. Violence of a political nature has shown a clear drop, and crime rates for murder, rape and kidnapping have also declined considerably. My country commends the efforts being made in that area and urges the Haitian authorities to continue to pursue them. However, the perceptible improvement would not have been possible without the help of MINUSTAH, which has sought to train the National Police while providing support in the fight against organized gangs. We congratulate MINUSTAH for that cooperation and urge that it be pursued.

In the humanitarian sphere, concerns continue with regard to the still very high number of internally displaced persons living in camps, where there has

been a decline in water and sanitation services due to a lack of funding. The shortage of financing is likely to deal a severe blow to that major programme for helping people, since the State does not yet have sufficient means to respond and cholera has still not been eradicated.

The overall situation in Haiti today requires that the international community continue its efforts. This is the right place to welcome the role played by the United Nations, in particular MINUSTAH, in the country before and in the hours immediately after the earthquake. Its involvement in many reconstruction, security and rule of law programmes must be commended because it renews hope in a country where fear, fatalism and uncertainty had taken hold in people's hearts and minds.

Looking at the progressive drawdown of the MINUSTAH surge after the earthquake, it is extremely urgent, as the report mentions, for the Haitian Government to take over the process of reconstruction and development. However, the road to reconstruction in Haiti seems to be a long one. In that regard, efforts undertaken by the country's authorities should remain supported by those from international organizations, donors and bilateral actors.

Helping Haiti to rebuild itself means bringing peace to the country and the entire region. Even if there is a role for the international community to play, it is first and foremost the Haitians themselves who must work to build a stable and prosperous State in their country. That is why we continue to say that now is not the time for divisiveness or for settling political accounts. Quite the opposite, Haitians must roll up their sleeves, and the authorities must establish a policy of dialogue and national reconciliation so that all citizens, both in the country and abroad, may take part in the reconstruction of their country.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mariano Fernández for his very insightful briefing. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2012/128). From the opinions we have heard around the table today, it is clear that there is a shared objective among the United Nations, the people of Haiti and the international community.

Until 2010, Haiti had made important strides towards stability, development and a better future. The devastating earthquake of 2010 reversed those positive

gains made incrementally over many years. Those gains are now lost to Haiti, and it will be difficult to move back to that period of recovery where the country was emerging from the shadows.

As noted by the representative of Haiti in the Security Council in 2011, the country had virtually collapsed after the earthquake. Rising from such devastation is no ordinary task. Most earthquake recovery is challenging in the best of circumstances, but becomes almost impossible in a post-conflict country. We therefore urge the Security Council and the international community to demonstrate patience towards, and solidarity with, the Government and the people of Haiti.

Pakistan is proud to stand with the people of Haiti, not only before but also during and after the devastation of 2010. Our support has been in the form of men on the ground, materiel and our strong personal belief in and commitment to Haiti and its future.

The biannual report of the Secretary-General is a useful tool for measuring progress and reversals in Haiti. It is satisfying to note that the report under consideration lists important progress in the area of security. Improvement in the security situation, with a diminishing trend of politically motivated violence, is a propitious development that can lead to long-term stability and economic recovery. This can be attributed to the positive efforts of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), especially with regard to the protection of vulnerable groups, including women and children, through community-based policing strategies.

The contribution of the Haitian National Police to improving the security situation can neither be denied nor denigrated, but Haiti will need a more robust judicial system in the future. As an evolving institution of significant promise, the Haitian Police has also improved its work and capacity, and works alongside MINUSTAH contingents in the form of joint patrols and anti-crime operations.

Our delegation has taken serious note of allegations of misconduct in MINUSTAH, as reported in the Secretary-General's report. Such allegations are taken with utmost seriousness. As a contributor to MINUSTAH and other United Nations missions, Pakistan is elaborate in its arrangements and legal provisions to investigate, prosecute and sentence anyone guilty of misconduct, with actions ranging from

dismissal without benefits to imprisonment. These are serious matters that cannot be the subject of compromise. Let my voice ring out loud and clear in this Chamber. The zero tolerance policy for misconduct is also our policy. There will be no stepping down or away from it. The high operational standards of our peacekeepers must match a similar level of excellence conduct and discipline on the part of its administrators.

The Secretary-General's report mentions slow progress in regard to the humanitarian and recovery situations. The ongoing cholera epidemic, food insecurity and extreme vulnerability to natural disasters augment the humanitarian challenge. To an extent, slow progress in the humanitarian and recovery situations is understandable given the natural trajectory of post-disaster recovery, where the initial period of high performance usually tapers off into a steady phase and a decline after some time. We are seeing this happen in Haiti.

However, we must not be complacent and try to build further on positive achievements. That is why I do not hesitate to say that the cholera epidemic has severely tested Haiti and we must, in every way possible, not only apologize but try to help alleviate this problem with not only more materiel but with whatever we have available to set this situation right. We will urge greater coordination and cohesion among different actors engaged in humanitarian work. We will also caution against the donor fatigue that can result from such protracted crises.

Political uncertainty and lack of national consensus can erode the nascent gains in the security and humanitarian sectors. Fissures and divisions among stakeholders are the usual ingredients of political discourse. A modicum of national consensus on the future course is essential. Such consensus has been eroded in Haiti following recent political events. Our delegation supports the call for a genuine and inclusive dialogue in order to achieve political agreement and reconciliation based on mutual tolerance, and we must allow Haitians to proceed on deciding their future by their own thinking and mechanisms. I would suggest that we listen more closely to them and to what they visualize, and help them in any way we can to proceed towards the future they envisage.

Pakistan has been a participant in United Nations peacekeeping missions in Haiti since 1993. As a part of

MINUSTAH, two formed police units from Pakistan have been deployed since 2010. Not just the Pakistani contingent but all components of MINUSTAH are implementing a challenging mandate under difficult circumstances.

From a surge of strength in 2010, the military and police capabilities of MINUSTAH are set to be drawn down to the pre-earthquake phase by the middle of this year, and that is what I believe is also wanted by the people of Haiti. MINUSTAH's drawdown must be the result of tangible improvements in the ground situation, which I am sure will happen. We hope that the Secretariat, in conjunction with the Haitian authorities, has conducted a national assessment of the ground situation in the present and future scenarios. We hope that any achievements of MINUSTAH will also be duly acknowledged, here and by the Haitians.

Pakistan supports the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Haiti. It will be important that a similar message of support be communicated to the brave and resilient people of Haiti from our collective deliberations in the Security Council today.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

Haiti has seen repeated efforts of the international community that have attempted and failed to provide stability in the medium to long terms. The United Kingdom does not want this pattern to continue. It is in no one's interest that the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) should leave before the security that it has established can be sustained by the Haitian authorities.

The United Kingdom notes that MINUSTAH finds itself in an increasingly difficult position, however. On the one hand, Haiti is heavily dependent on the Mission to provide security. On the basis of current trends, that will remain the case for some years. On the other hand, Haitians from all levels of society are becoming increasingly vocal in their calls for MINUSTAH to leave. There is a very real risk that, if political uncertainty in Haiti persists, MINUSTAH will be dragged into the debate, making its task harder still.

In part, these calls are being exacerbated by allegations of misconduct by MINUSTAH personnel. The United Kingdom is concerned by such allegations,

which should be taken extremely seriously. We firmly support the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, and we urge a rigorous and transparent approach to these allegations. This would help MINUSTAH to restore its credibility with the people of Haiti.

In its efforts following the earthquake in 2010, MINUSTAH has played a significant role in recovery and in helping to ensure access to basic services. These efforts have built support among the local population — support that has been reinforced by the quick-impact projects that the Mission has delivered. But the United Kingdom believes that it is now vital that the Mission focus on working to ensure that stability and security can be sustained once MINUSTAH has departed. To that end, the Mission has two clear tasks.

First, MINUSTAH must build the capacity of the Haitian National Police so that it can take full responsibility for Haiti's security. There needs to be a clearer matching of Mission personnel to the various aspects of this task. This is not a task solely for MINUSTAH, but there needs to be clarity among all those involved, in the Mission and beyond, as to what capacity the Haitian National Police needs to build and what the benchmarks and timetable will be for achieving it.

Secondly, there needs to be greater effort to support the political process, including elections, democratic governance and related State institutions. Political uncertainty is the most likely trigger of instability. Again, MINUSTAH cannot be expected to do this alone, and needs to coordinate its efforts with those of other actors. All actors need to play their part, working in a cooperative and constructive manner, respecting the Constitution and helping to ensure political stability.

In conclusion, the United Kingdom believes, of course, that conditions on the ground will determine when MINUSTAH draws down. However, in order that security and stability can be sustained when MINUSTAH does draw down, it needs to begin planning for that drawdown now. Only by doing that can the right balance be struck between the Haitian National Police taking up the security burden and a measured drawdown of MINUSTAH that does not jeopardize security gains.

I now resume my functions as president of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Haiti.

Mr. Cazeau (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): We are pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the Security Council this month. We wish you every success and are confident that, under your guidance, our debates will be successful.

On behalf of the people and Government of Haiti, I would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his 29 February report (S/2012/128) on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). It must be acknowledged that, far from being a routine exercise, the report is first and foremost an outline of the progress that has in fact been made. However, much remains to be done in a socio-economic environment that continues to be somewhat precarious. But our people, especially youth and women, are demanding from the powers that be that they be able to participate in public affairs.

Haiti very much appreciates the ongoing attention to the situation in our country. That commitment was reaffirmed by the recent field visit to Haiti by the Security Council, when the Council was able to see for itself what is taking place. The Council also heard a briefing on its mission (see S/PV.6724) for Ambassador Susan Rice, who led the mission. We thank her for the dedication and insight.

I am hopeful that, thanks to her leadership and that of the Security Council, Haiti will one day no longer figure in United Nations reports and resolutions as a "threat to international peace and security", as that phrase strikes fear in investors. Haiti wants to move from humanitarian assistance towards sustainable development through investment, including foreign direct investment. During his meeting with the members of the Council's mission, President Michel Joseph Martelly pointed out that Haiti was not a threat to anyone.

The presence here today of Ambassador Mario Fernández, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, is a sign of the attention focused on MINUSTAH's accomplishments and, above all, on the state of the Haitian people, who are determined to fashion a better future for their country, which has been forced to choose between stability,

respect from human rights and sustainable development. We thank him for having agreed to serve in our country to help the Haitian Government and the United Nations to coordinate efforts to find lasting solutions to the situation of my brothers and sisters, in a word, to change the country's image.

The political and security situation in Haiti has remained on the Security Council's agenda for almost eight years, which, to a certain degree, may seem like a long time or serve as a source of discouragement. We understand that tensions and the all too frequent political crises are major obstacles to our country's stability and development. The Prime Minister and the members of the Cabinet recently resigned, but the Government continues to function pending the confirmation of a new Prime Minister. President Martelly immediately took the necessary steps to appoint a new Prime Minister, namely, Foreign Minister Laurent Salvador Lamothe. He also submitted Mr. Lamothe's candidature to the Parliament for confirmation.

We have heard that members of Parliament, aware of their responsibilities and the powers conferred upon them as elected officials, are already at work looking into the nomination of the Prime Minister. All indications are that the confirmation process will be treated as a matter of urgency and that Haiti will soon have a new Prime Minister, provided that it meets the demands of the Constitution and our country's laws. We fully share the Secretary-General's observation that it is up to Haiti's executive and legislative branches to act in the broader interests of the Haitian people and proceed expeditiously with the appointment of a new Prime Minister.

There have been some recent improvements in the security situation, thanks to better coordination between the Haitian National Police (HNP) and MINUSTAH. That does not mean that there are no spoilers, on the contrary. Spoilers emerge from time to time to undo the progress made to date in the security sector. In that regard, bearing in mind that the troops arrived in the country in the wake of the earthquake are beginning to leave, it is appropriate to step up training and capacity-building for the HNP in order that, in due course, it is able to take on its responsibilities and be a true agent for change and development, that is to say, a professional police force.

With regard to the rule of law, in less than five years, the Government has been able to complete the Supreme Court.

The public is up in arms about the presence of former demobilized members of the Haitian armed forces who have returned to their former barracks, with some even engaging in military training. They have yet to return to their homes, despite repeated calls for them to do so from President Martelly, who wants a negotiated, peaceful solution to this situation, which serves to stir up problems and is only fuelling tensions.

There are still approximately 500,000 people living in tents. With the rainy season almost upon us, the Government has decided to significantly lower that number by June. The Council will understand that this effort requires considerable financial recourses, for it is not enough just to encourage people to leave their tents. They must be helped financially to find housing, as well as allowed to take the first steps in an environment that is sometimes completely new. The Haitian Government has made this situation one of its priorities, which we continue to work on.

Allow me to pay well-deserved tribute to the various national and international non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies that are doing outstanding work on the ground. By June, some of them, such as the World Food Programme, will face disastrous economic situations that will force them to downscale their activities in tent encampments and school feeding centres, including considerable reductions in the number of local personnel, thereby increasing unemployment, which is already too high. I take this opportunity to call on Haiti's friends and on donors to think about those organizations, the international community's valuable and talented ambassadors on the ground in Haiti, and help them find the necessary resources to provide a glimmer of hope for the poorest: education and food.

Haiti is grateful for the assistance and support it has received from United Nations staff who work for peace, specifically MINUSTAH, whose plans for a progressive and coordinated withdrawal from the country are perhaps already in the works. Those plans will be made known, in coordination with the Haitian Government, once the international community sees that the HNP and Haiti's judiciary are mature enough to move the country forward.

I again wish to thank Ambassador Fernández for his comments today, as he is on the ground in Haiti on a daily basis. I also welcome the comments made by the members of the Council. Finally, I would like to emphasize the courage of the national authorities of two troop-contributing countries, to which I shall not refer by name, who took a resolute decision to try in their own courts members of their contingents accused of sexually abusing Haitian minors. Their decision should serve as an example of the implementation of a zero-tolerance policy in cases of such allegations, in Haiti as well as anywhere else in the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Mariano Fernández for his briefing and, more important, for his continued dedication and firm support to the Haitian people in their efforts to consolidate democracy and stability, make further progress in post-disaster recovery and achieve higher levels of socio-economic development.

Today, the Council is called upon to assess the situation in Haiti. We have witnessed both significant progress towards stabilization as well as persistent economic and political challenges. Brazil encourages Haitian leaders to work together to ease tensions and allow for the timely appointment of a new Prime Minister and for the effective organization of legislative elections, which will enhance Haitian democracy. We remain confident in the ability of Haitians to overcome differences and strengthen their political institutions in an environment of continued improvement in the human rights situation.

Also key to making institutional progress in Haiti today is responding effectively to the illegal occupation of the former armed forces by groups of individuals in military fatigue. We take note with satisfaction of the measures announced by President Martelly in that regard. We strongly encourage sustained commitment in this matter of the utmost importance for Haiti's stability.

Improvements in the capabilities of the Haitian National Police (HNP) and enhanced cooperation between the HNP and the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) police and military components are very positive developments. Further consolidating the HNP is essential to allow for its

timely assumption of security tasks currently undertaken by MINUSTAH's troops, which we believe remain indispensable.

In calibrating the pace of the future military drawdown, the Council must assess the challenges still ahead and progress in building capacity, training and equipping the Haitian National Police. Some of the challenges include the risk of resurgence in gang violence and specific security needs of the most vulnerable Haitians, in particular women and children. Strong political commitment on the part of the Government to strengthening the HNP will ensure Haiti's ability to secure a stable environment in the country.

As we have stated on many occasions, the promotion of peace in situations such as that which prevails in Haiti cannot be dissociated from the promotion of development in a context of respect for the sovereignty of the host country. We are glad that the Security Council, during its recent mission to Haiti, noted that Haitians' levels of poverty are incompatible with the country's long-term stability. We praise the work of the United Nations agencies and MINUSTAH in fostering local capacities and helping to build strong Haitian institutions.

The work of MINUSTAH's military engineers serve as catalytic actions that contribute to further stability, to saving lives and to supporting the work of local and international development actors. The international community has a constructive role to play in improving the effectiveness and national ownership of development efforts and fully honouring its commitments.

In her visit to Haiti last month, President Dilma Rousseff reiterated Brazil's solidarity with the Haitian Government and people and our commitment to a long-term partnership based on mutual respect. In addition to the continuation of bilateral cooperation projects in areas such as public health, food security, nutrition and professional training, Brazil continues to lead plurilateral efforts towards the construction of the hydroelectric plant of Artibonite 4C. This project will generate jobs while providing a large segment of the Haitian population with a valuable source of renewable energy. Brazil has committed \$40 million to the construction of this plant. We continue to seek the engagement of a wider group of partners to complete

this work, which has been defined as a priority by the Haitian Government.

We are fully aware of the challenges ahead in Haiti's path towards sustainable development and peace. At the same time, we see that, although much remains to be done, the progress achieved since the tragic earthquake of 2010 is significant. The population still living in camps has been considerably reduced and a new dynamism is felt in some areas of business. It has also allowed for a partial drawdown of MINUSTAH's military surge capabilities, with an increased participation of the police contingents and of the HNP in providing security and stability. We hope that further political and institutional progress will sustain this trend.

We are confident that Haiti will succeed in its efforts with the support of the international community in an environment of full respect for Haiti's sovereignty, mutual respect, commitment and constant dialogue. That is what Brazil has been doing and will continue to do.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The acceding country Croatia; the candidate countries Iceland, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

I first wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Fernández, for his briefing to the Council. I also thank the Permanent Representative of Haiti for the comments he has just made.

Last September, during the previous debate (S/PV.6618) on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), we welcomed the peaceful and democratic election of a new President and called for the creation of a new Government. Four months later, our predictions of a period of political stability and reconstruction have been undermined by

the recent resignation of the former Prime Minister, Mr. Garry Conille. The executive and legislative branches must engage in a constructive dialogue in order to work in a spirit of compromise and move effectively towards the appointment of a new Prime Minister.

In the coming months, Haiti's Parliament will lose a third of its senators as their terms expire, while the mayors are already working beyond their four-year terms of office. The timely organization of partial legislative and municipal elections is therefore essential to the effective functioning of Haiti's democratic institutions and local administration.

In the context of a new reconfiguration of MINUSTAH's forces, it will be important for the Mission to remain focused on its core mandate of supporting the political process and strengthening the rule of law and security institutions. The European Union and its member States will continue to work hand in hand with the relevant authorities to support the transition process so that they can take increasing responsibility for the country's stability, in particular the training of a strong and effective National Police. Progress in this respect should not be undermined by the establishment of a second security force.

The criticisms of MINUSTAH based on allegations of serious professional misconduct remain a reason for grave concern. It is important that the Mission continue to demonstrate the highest standards of integrity. It should respond to those allegations with appropriate investigations and disciplinary measures.

Over the past two years, the European Union has made an significant contribution to Haiti. In 2010, €522 million were pledged from the European Union's budget to assist the Haitian Government. Today, more than €358 million have been disbursed. Our assistance has brought immediate relief to over 5 million Haitians and aims to ensure the long-term recovery of their country.

Today, half a million Haitians still live in camps and cholera persists. Women and children are particularly affected. The efforts of donors, including the European Union, to reduce the risk of natural disasters have increased the country's ability to better cope with those disasters. Nevertheless, the country remains vulnerable.

The current political stalemate must end. Haiti and its citizens cannot afford further political turmoil and instability. The European Union and its member States remain fully committed to supporting Haiti in its efforts to build a brighter future for the Haitian population. The European Union Development Commissioner, Mr. Piebalgs, was in Port-au-Prince yesterday for a two-day visit in which he announced a new contribution of €100 million aimed at strengthening the reconstruction process.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. De Laiglesia (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to start by thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Mariano Fernández, for his briefing and commending him for his excellent work at the head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). My delegation aligns itself with the statement read out by the Head of the Delegation of the European Union. I will make some additional comments in my national capacity.

Spain continues to follow with concern the new political crisis affecting Haiti after the resignation of Prime Minister Garry Conille. It is a potential source of instability and a serious obstacle to the reconstruction of the country and the use of economic opportunities for its development. We trust that the crisis will be resolved as soon as possible with the appointment of a new Prime Minister who can carry out the institutional, economic and social reforms needed in Haiti in order to effectively accomplish the task of reconstruction. Cooperation from all political actors, particularly an understanding among the legislative and executive branches, is vital at this critical time.

Two additional measures that will certainly assist in restoring political stability are, on the one hand, the promulgation of the constitutional reforms and, on the other, the holding of partial legislative and municipal elections through the establishment of a credible electoral council.

Means must be found to effectively channel international aid to Haiti, in particular after the expiration of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission this past October. We must effectively undertake the vast responsibility of channelling such aid and ensuring that it leads to better conditions for the people of Haiti, and of establishing a foundation for sustainable and

durable economic development. It must not be forgotten that while three-quarters of the people live on less than \$2 a day, approximately half of the people live on less than \$1 a day.

I have two thoughts on the issue of security. First, Spain expresses its great concern and condemns the emergence of armed groups that have increased the atmosphere of instability and insecurity. The high potential number of incidents involving those groups or irregular militias remains of concern. We trust that there will be an appropriate response from the Haitian authorities, in particular from the Minister of the Interior. Secondly, Spain believes that prioritizing the security sector will promote the strengthening of the Haitian National Police (HNP). My country considers it a priority that the HNP be able to assume full responsibility for security as soon as possible. In that respect, we share the concern of the Secretary-General and the Security Council, as expressed in its report on the mission in Haiti, over the slowdown in recruitment efforts. The current pace is insufficient for meeting the target in 5 years and increasing the current 10,000 police to 16,000 by 2016, in compliance with the HNP Development Plan 2012-2016.

Finally, with respect to MINUSTAH, I will limit myself to two comments. First, my country believes that the partial reduction of the post-earthquake surge carried out under resolution 2012 (2011) adopted in October 2011, must be continued until its completion in June. Secondly, we also trust that the response to the cases of misconduct of which Mission staff have been accused will be dealt with correctly in accordance with the zero tolerance policy of the United Nations. Internal investigations have started and disciplinary measures have been promptly taken.

My country remains firm in its commitment to providing assistance. Spain is the third-ranking bilateral donor to Haiti. When President Martelly visited my country last July, we set up a fund of €50 million for small and medium-sized enterprises. I am pleased to inform the Council today that the fund is already available.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Uruguay.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti, comprised of Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Guatemala, Peru, the

United States of America and my country, Uruguay. I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the United Kingdom delegation on having organized this debate to discuss the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (S/2012/128). The Group of Friends of Haiti welcomes the presence today of Mr. Mariano Fernández, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, and thanks him for his comprehensive briefing.

The Group of Friends of Haiti expresses its continued support for the Government and people of Haiti in rebuilding their country, consolidating peace, democracy and stability, and promoting recovery and sustainable development. The Group of Friends recognizes the achievements made since the prior report (S/2011/540) with respect to post-earthquake reconstruction and peacebuilding, including progress in the strengthening of the rule of law in Haiti, such as the long-awaited appointment of the President and Vice-President of the Supreme Court.

However, the Group notes with concern the information contained in the recent report of the Secretary-General on the political tensions among the branches of the Government, in particular as noted in paragraphs 54 and 55. The Group of Friends encourages the representatives of the executive and legislative branches to coordinate their efforts in a spirit of compromise in order to strengthen democratic institutions and the rule of law and, above all, to meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Haiti.

The Group notes that the overall security situation in Haiti has remained stable, albeit fragile. In that context, the Group reiterates that political stability is essential to maintaining progress towards stabilization and reconstruction, and underlines the importance of mitigating the potential negative impact of political uncertainty on the situation. In that respect, the Group of Friends emphasizes the critical role of the Haitian National Police (HNP), and stresses the importance of completing the process of strengthening and reforming the HNP to enable its full assumption of the responsibility for security in Haiti.

The Group acknowledges once again that, since the prior report of the Secretary-General, the military and police personnel of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) have continued to play a vital role in maintaining overall security and stability and in supporting the reform and

strengthening process of the HNP, which remain priorities for MINUSTAH, as well as in reconstruction and other efforts. It also takes note of the ongoing process of the drawdown of staff, pursuant to resolution 2012 (2011), and encourages its smooth and orderly conduct.

The Group of Friends of Haiti expresses its grave concern regarding the allegations of serious misconduct by some MINUSTAH personnel, which have negatively affected support for the Mission and risk undermining its work. The Group of Friends urges all actors involved to assume their responsibilities in order to prevent such cases, to investigate allegations and to eventually hold those responsible accountable.

I would like to add a brief note on that issue in my national capacity. I take this opportunity to affirm that, since our last attendance at a meeting of the Security Council to discuss this issue (see S/PV.6618), Uruguayan authorities have continued to take the allegation of a case of grave misconduct in Port Salut very seriously. The case has now been referred to the ordinary criminal court, which is now considering the case under statutory norms and developing sustained cooperation with the Haitian authorities and the Secretariat in order to achieve justice based on transparency and due process.

The Group acknowledges with satisfaction the reduced number of internally displaced persons in Haiti. However, it would like to underscore that Haiti continues to face significant humanitarian challenges, such as the more than 500,000 camp residents, the ongoing cholera epidemic and dependence on food assistance. Those challenges remind us of the importance of maintaining the cooperation between the international community and the Government of Haiti to meet the needs of the Haitian people. In that regard, the Group of Friends of Haiti acknowledges the efforts of the donor community and calls on them to fulfil the pledges they have made without delay.

The Group of Friends of Haiti stresses that security, development and stability are closely related, interlinked and mutually reinforcing. At the same time, the Group stresses that there can be no genuine stability or sustainable development in Haiti without a strengthening of its democratic institutions. In that context, the Group emphasizes the importance of promoting the rule of law in strengthening Haitian institutions and further reaffirms the responsibility of

MINUSTAH to support the Haitian State in the fields of the rule of law, good governance, the extension of State authority and the promotion and protection of human rights, in accordance with its mandate.

Finally, the Group reiterates its solidarity with the Haitian people and its commitment to working closely with the Haitian authorities and MINUSTAH, and encourages the Haitian political leadership to work cooperatively to provide the political stability necessary to strengthening democracy, institutions and economic development in Haiti.

The Group of Friends of Haiti expresses its support for and recognition to the women and men of MINUSTAH for their dedication and tireless efforts to support the recovery and stability in Haiti.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Senegal.

Mr. Diallo (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, Sir, to express my warmest congratulations on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of March and to thank your predecessors for the work they accomplished in guiding this body. I would also like to welcome the renewed commitment of the Council, which has just returned from a mission to Haiti, to better understanding the situation prevailing there.

Indeed, the number of resolutions adopted by this organ with respect to Haiti — more than 10 altogether between 2004 and 2011 — bears ample witness to the interest it attaches to the recovery of that country, which more than ever needs the support of the international community. I also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for presenting the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/128), which further informs us about the status of the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and its prospects for the months to come.

Through resolution 1542 (2004), members will recall, MINUSTAH was made responsible for helping the Haitian Government and people to establish a safe, stable environment in Haiti, supporting the political process under way and improving the human rights situation, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Meanwhile, the earthquake of 12 January 2010 dealt a severe blow to the convalescing Haitian nation, adding the loss of life

and devastated infrastructure. The resulting difficulties in the political, economic and humanitarian spheres naturally led to an increase in the size of MINUSTAH's staff.

Based on a reading of the current report, it is clear that significant progress has grown out of the intelligent collaboration among the various components of MINUSTAH and the Haitian authorities. In that regard, we would do well to emphasize the overall improvement in the security situation, which is reinforced by the significant drop in the number of murders, rapes and kidnappings.

I would like to congratulate MINUSTAH on the progress made to date, as well as the efforts undertaken by the Haitian Government, despite a difficult political context. Nonetheless, concerns remain with respect to the effects of the prolonged absence of a stable Government on the Haitian political situation, which has been severely weakened. The absence of a consensual road map among the different political forces for strengthening institutions and improving the rule of law could undermine the encouraging results already achieved. Ultimately, such a consensus is necessary in order to draft reforms that could help Haiti to establish an effective, independent judiciary and a fully operational police force, and, most importantly, to hold free, democratic elections in 2012. That is the fraternal message that Senegal would like to offer the political class of that friendly country.

But the challenge facing Haiti is not merely political. It is also humanitarian and involves public health. We must help that devastated country to manage the aftereffects of the earthquake, deforestation, and above all the epidemics that find fertile ground under such circumstances.

Just as numerous countries came to Haiti's bedside, in 2005 Senegal offered MINUSTAH an entire police unit comprising 85 gendarmes, before raising that number to 140 in 2010, without counting the 24 police officers already on the ground. In addition, because of the centuries-old historic links between Haiti and the African continent, Senegal pursued its efforts in solidarity with the Haitian people in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake by signing a cooperation agreement and a protocol covering the hosting, training and professional integration of Haitian nationals in Senegal. To date, 160 Haitian students have been enrolled in Senegalese universities.

That process has been broadened by Senegalese citizens who meet within private organizations such as the Senegal-Haiti Initiative Committee to grant scholarships to Haitian students and to donate medicines. This attests to the great hope that the Government and people of Senegal attach to the return of stability to Haiti so that it can embark on the path of true development.

Senegal endorses the recommendations contained in the report and remains convinced of the capacities of the Haitian political class and the unswerving commitment of the international community to meeting the challenges.

To conclude, I assure the Council of the unflagging will and commitment of the Government of Senegal to contributing to the implementation of MINUSTAH's mandate and to all the other goals set by the United Nations system to aid in Haiti's recovery.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I would like to start by addressing my most sincere thanks to you, Sir, and to the United Kingdom delegation for having organized this debate on Haiti.

I also stress that we stand side by side with the people of Haiti, who yesterday relived the fear and chill of a new earthquake. I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Mariano Fernández, for introducing the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/128).

Today's discussion is taking place at yet another moment of political instability in Haiti. That instability is most unfortunate. Prime Minister Conille resigned on 24 February after only four months in office. His appointment followed five months of political deadlock as the Government and Parliament squabbled over a nominee. Too many in the political elite remain indifferent to the dire needs of the average Haitian and the serious hardship Haitians face in rebuilding their livelihoods and their country.

Canada welcomes the latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Haiti. We commend the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) for its vital contribution to the maintenance of overall security and stability in Haiti. As the Secretary-General highlighted in his report, there has been some progress, but daunting challenges

persist and security gains remain fragile. As expressed in the report, Canada's sincere hope is that Haiti's political stakeholders in the legislative and executive branches will rise above partisan bickering. They must fully assume their responsibilities to ensure continuity of governance, the proper functioning of democratic institutions, sound management of public funds and the strengthening of the rule of law.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada observes with great concern the mobilization of armed groups in Haiti. We note that President Martelly is moving forward to address the issue, and we hope that actions taken by the Haitian Government will allow for the dismantling of those groups to prevent them from destabilizing the country.

We strongly remind the Council that the priority to which President Martelly has formally subscribed is the development of the Haitian National Police and the implementation of all its operational components. We must not, on any account, distract ourselves from that objective, in which Canada, along with international and Haitian partners, has made a very important and massive investment.

Moreover, only a sincere and hard-fought battle to eliminate corruption and establish the rule of law will realize the value of efforts to attract foreign investment and repair the country's image. Trust can only be built on concrete and significant action — on courageous action motivated by the public interest and based on democratic principles, and not simply on words.

Canada will therefore look to the Haitian Government to urgently implement concrete actions. The Government must take firm steps against corruption, including through providing necessary support and independence to bodies such as the audit commission established to investigate contracts awarded following the earthquake, and to the independent experts commission mandated by the Minister of Justice to investigate unresolved assassination cases.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada's commitment to supporting Haiti is long-term, both in the delivery of humanitarian assistance as well as the ongoing reconstruction and longer term development efforts. From 2006 to 2012, Canada has committed more than \$1 billion to Haiti. However,

Haitian authorities must show real resolve to deal with the true problems still affecting their country. Two years after the earthquake, our thoughts are with the Haitian people, who are still struggling to rebuild their lives.

Canada believes that the Haitian reconstruction process must be led by accountable political actors who prioritize and address the needs of the Haitian people and put those needs before issues of narrow personal and political interest. The process must be transparent and fair.

We note that President Martelly moved quickly to designate a successor to Prime Minister Conille. We hope that the Parliament and the executive authorities will act expeditiously to reach an agreement on the nomination of the new Prime Minister, so that the work of the Government is not stalled further.

Haiti faces many governance challenges that need urgent attention — not the least of which are constitutional reform, and work towards the creation of a permanent electoral council so that the elections, which already have been delayed, can be organized.

We all recognize that the wholesale change of the magnitude required in Haiti does not happen overnight, but it will not happen at all without steadfast political will. Haitian leaders need to demonstrate a firm and unwavering commitment to democratic principles and the rule of law in order to achieve the sustainable progress that the international community expects and the Haitian people deserve.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Nishida (Japan): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Mariano Fernández, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), for his very comprehensive briefing. I also pay my respects to the men and women of MINUSTAH for the commitment and fortitude they have demonstrated in a difficult situation.

I welcome the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/128) on MINUSTAH issued last week. As the report mentions, MINUSTAH personnel have shown a continued dedication and commitment in support of the recovery and stability of Haiti. We commend them for that and for their concrete results.

Given the situation, we welcome the fact that MINUSTAH is refocusing its efforts on key mandated tasks. At the same time, many challenges remain to be addressed, such as the internally displaced persons camps, the cholera epidemic, unemployment and strengthening of the rule of law in Haiti.

To ensure further success in the area of rehabilitation and reconstruction, Japan would like to underscore that both self-help efforts by the Haitian authorities, based on the ownership of the Haitian people, and international support for Haiti are of paramount importance and must be implemented in tandem.

With regard to the security issue, as the Secretary-General's report also mentions, we appreciate the endeavours of MINUSTAH and the troop- and police-contributing countries in maintaining a relatively calm security situation in Haiti. We also welcome the fact that the capacity of the Haitian National Police (HNP) to provide adequate protection to the civilian population has been further enhanced.

Those achievements notwithstanding, we also recognize that, in order to achieve sustainable development, the Government of Haiti needs to secure a socio-economic foundation through efforts to strengthen the rule of law. In that regard, we would like to stress that, when it comes to the capacity-building of Haitian authorities, international partners should coordinate their efforts closely with the Government of Haiti. The Government, for its part, must deepen its commitment to those efforts.

Japan is very concerned about political instability in Haiti, as evidenced by the sudden resignation of the Haitian Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Garry Conille, and the continuing stand-off between the legislative and executive branches. Political stability is an essential component for overall stabilization and reconstruction in Haiti. From that perspective, we urge all relevant political actors in Haiti to cooperate with each other from the broader perspective of the welfare of the people of Haiti, and not to allow political interests to dictate their priorities. It is also our expectation that the new Haitian Prime Minister will be approved by the Haitian Parliament in a timely manner and that the Government of Haiti will be ready to take renewed steps to accelerate the reconstruction process as early as possible.

With regard to the reestablishment of the Haitian army, while Japan respects the sovereignty of Haiti to make decisions regarding its own national agenda, we would like to underline our belief that one of the top priorities for the country should be to rebuild the Haitian National Police and to transform the HNP into a credible organization that can take full responsibility for security in Haiti. We also recognize that the resources that the international community can provide for Haiti are not unlimited, and that, therefore, such resources should be utilized in an effective and efficient manner.

In addition, we are concerned about the increasing reports of the mobilization of armed former members of the Haitian armed forces, who have occupied a number of former training camps, and about the insecurity and instability to which this may give rise in Haiti. In that regard, we encourage the Government of Haiti to take appropriate measures to address this threatening mobilization and to investigate its sources of funding and logistical support.

The cases of misconduct, such as sexual abuse, by members of MINUSTAH that have taken place recently are also cause for serious concern. Such dishonourable conduct, by arousing hostility among the Haitian people towards MINUSTAH and its personnel, may have a negative impact not only on the safety of other members of MINUSTAH but also on the overall security situation and on the reconstruction efforts in Haiti. We would like to call strongly on the Secretariat to implement a strict zero-tolerance policy with respect to the peacekeepers involved in such cases, and to take effective measures to prevent the recurrence of misconduct of that kind.

The Government of Japan has dispatched an engineering unit of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force to MINUSTAH. The number of personnel who have served in that contingent since its deployment is already approximately 1,860. The contingent has made a contribution to the reconstruction of Haiti through various efforts, such as the removal of rubble, the dismantling of damaged buildings, the repair of facilities in internally displaced persons camps, road repair, the construction of orphanage facilities and water distribution in response to the outbreak of cholera. It is our hope that the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Haiti will thus be further accelerated.

In addition, Japan has pledged \$100 million for emergency relief and reconstruction for Haiti and has already disbursed an amount exceeding its original pledge. Japan intends to continue to extend support for Haiti, particularly in the field of basic social services such as health, hygiene and education.

It has been almost a year since the Great East Japan Earthquake struck Japan on 11 March 2011. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that occurred in Haiti almost two years ago, the Haitian people have made determined efforts to address many challenges similar to those that the Japanese people have now been facing. I am confident that Haiti and Japan, in close collaboration with the international community, will overcome these difficulties through mutual encouragement and steadfast efforts towards a brighter future.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to address the situation in the Republic of Haiti. My delegation also wishes to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ambassador Mariano Fernández for the work done by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), including the various United Nations agencies currently operating there. The comprehensive report that he has just given us described the progress made to date as well as the major challenges remaining.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti. We also reaffirm our support for the people and Government of Haiti in the areas of reconstruction, peacebuilding, democracy, stability and the promotion of sustainable development. Chile will continue to support the medium- and long-term cooperation programmes under way in Haiti. That exemplifies the continuity of the commitment to the people of Haiti that our country assumed in 2004.

For Chile, the fragility of the relationship between the legislative and executive branches is a cause for concern, in particular because of its negative implications on governance and the socio-economic development of the Haitian people. The formation of a Government is a prerequisite for the country's stability and for the development of Haiti's institutions and

economy. Similarly, the imminent convening of local, municipal and parliamentary elections is another prerequisite for the success of the democratic process in Haiti.

We believe there is a need for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and for the international community to continue to promote dialogue and political understanding among the Haitian authorities in order to meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Haiti. The remarks of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General have been encouraging in that regard.

The Government of Chile recognizes and commends the achievements in the area of strengthening the justice system, as well as the implications for the rule of law, as reflected by the appointment of a new President of the Supreme Court. We should also highlight the authorities' commitment to establish a High Judicial Council in the near future. Even so, much remains to be done and there is a need for continued progress on ensuring equality before the law and due process for all of the people of Haiti.

Chile notes that the report of the Secretary-General indicates the security situation remains stable but fragile. The role played by MINUSTAH in maintaining stability and security is central. In that regard, my Government believes that strengthening the Haitian National Police must be a top priority and one of MINUSTAH's major goals, and we recognize the progress made and the challenges in this area. Chile will continue to strengthen police cooperation with Haiti through professional training, both at a basic level and at higher levels. Such training is necessary to ensure respect for human rights and the democratic development of the country.

The Government of Chile is concerned about the emergence in recent months of groups challenging local authorities, as described in paragraph 8 of the report of the Secretary-General. We believe that those groups could become a source of instability affecting the social and political process in Haiti. We urge the Haitian authorities to make a strong appeal against such informal mobilization and to investigate and block its funding sources and support, in line, of course, with the country's legal framework.

My Government wishes to highlight the role of MINUSTAH's corps of engineers, through the so-called quick-impact projects in priority areas identified

in September 2011, such as cholera mitigation, security lighting and the repair of roads and other infrastructure, including infrastructure needed in the area of the rule of law. Those projects make a concrete contribution to the welfare and security of the Haitian population and should be strengthened. Security and development are two complementary concepts that cannot be addressed separately.

Among the quick-impact projects, we would like to highlight the work of the joint corps of Chilean and Ecuadoran engineers, who have improved the canal system in Cité Soleil, including the thorough cleaning of the central canal, and repaved the road encircling Port-au-Prince, together with Korean military engineers.

I must mention the allegations of sexual misconduct involving some members of MINUSTAH. Chile considers that unacceptable and believes that troop-contributing countries must follow a zero-tolerance policy on the subject. In an organization of such prominent moral importance as the United Nations, such conduct cannot be permitted in any circumstances, and troop-contributing countries must prevent it and punish the perpetrators.

As my Government has stated previously, Latin America is committed to the future of Haiti, through the implementation of coherent, sustainable strategies to confront the challenges it faces. That is worth underlining, because it means working together in a coordinated way with representatives of other regions. The Government of Chile believes it necessary to continue cooperating in Haiti's institutional capacity-building, on the basis of national ownership, so that local communities themselves can gradually take on the various responsibilities entailed in national reconstruction.

Along with strengthening cooperation in building policing capacity, we are also committed to improving primary education, through two early childhood centres where Chilean volunteers and Haitian educators work to provide the best educational conditions, with equal access, to develop skills, abilities and attitudes, to support Haitian families.

Our country will continue supporting the efforts of the Government and people of Haiti in peace and security, development, the promotion and protection of human rights and the establishment of the rule of law.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. Román-Morey (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to commend the initiative of the United Kingdom presidency in convening this debate on the situation in Haiti. We also welcome the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, Mr. Mariano Fernández, and thank him for his briefing.

Since 2004 Peru has taken an active part in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), with a military contingent of 366 troops, as well as military officers in the Mission's command. Moreover, Peru is a member of the Group of Friends of Haiti, the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, the Organization of American States Group of Friends of Haiti and the Latin American mechanism for political cooperation on Haiti.

On that subject, my delegation would like to draw the attention of the Security Council to two aspects of the Secretary-General's report (S/2012/128) that Peru believes to be of the greatest importance to address right away. The first is the need to maintain support for the Haitian authorities in creating and strengthening solid public institutions to deal with the security and development problems the country faces. And the second is the need to continue working to stabilize the fragile political situation in Haiti.

Peru strongly believes that enduring, sustainable social and economic development is impossible without solid institutions that promote and support development. The work of MINUSTAH is essential in providing the Haitian authorities with the help needed to create the security under which to strengthen the rule of law, consolidate democracy and build capacities. However, as we have noted on previous occasions, the challenge remains to foster a principle of national ownership whereby the Haitian Government itself would take the lead in the process of reconstruction and institution-building, in keeping with its established national strategies and priorities.

As already stated by previous speakers — especially in the statement made by the representative of Uruguay on behalf of the Group of Friends of Haiti, to which Peru subscribes — there is great concern about the fragile political situation in Haiti, especially around the most recent reported events. In that

connection, Peru calls on the Haitian authorities to find a prompt solution to the political crisis, which is directly affecting the reconstruction process in Haiti, and could undermine advances made in recent years.

Along the same lines, and noting the democratic yearnings of the Haitian people, my delegation expresses its hope that the next electoral process will take place within the established time frame and in a democratic and transparent way. I would like to stress the importance of the work being done by MINUSTAH in that regard, as well as the support of other regional organizations, in ensuring that the electoral process takes place without irregularities.

On the other hand, I want to recognize the progress made in institutionalizing and strengthening the Haitian National Police, which continues to take an active role in protecting the safety of civilians. We hope that in the near future the Haitian Police will stand as an example of a solid institution that promotes respect for the rule of law and safeguards the population.

On the subject of security I want to underline that, while the situation is stable because of the presence of the MINUSTAH force, my delegation is greatly concerned by the irregular or illegal armed groups — as the Haitian authorities themselves call them — who take organized action, in military uniform, under the name of the Haitian armed forces. The Haitian authorities must without delay investigate the truth about those groups, and learn about their financing and training, as the Secretary-General states in his recent report. There have been indications that the groups might well have long possessed small arms and light weapons.

Although that is most worrying, Peru also believes it is of great importance to improve coordination among the various United Nations agencies operating in Haiti. I should like to remind the Council that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development, based in Lima, has broad regional experience in collecting and destroying small arms and light weapons that remained in civilian possession in various post-conflict situations. We believe the United Nations should at least consider making use of that opportunity.

Finally, my delegation believes that the work of MINUSTAH is far from done and trusts that the Security Council will renew its mandate and maintain

ongoing support to achieve reconstruction and solid national institution-building, so as to solidify the rule of law and fill the gaps created by weakened institutional capacity and the country's lack of human and material resources, emphasizing the three factors directly affecting Haiti's recovery and reconstruction process — governability, security and development.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6733rd meeting

Monday, 12 March 2012, 9.30 a.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Hague	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Musayev
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Juppé
	Germany	Mr. Westerwelle
	Guatemala	Mr. Caballeros
	India	Mr. Kumar
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Tarar
	Portugal	Mr. Portas
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	Togo	Mr. Mbeou
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2012/129)

Letter dated 7 March 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/139)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

12-25841 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2012/129)

Letter dated 7 March 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/139)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2012/146, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, Morocco, Portugal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2012/129, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/139, which contains a letter dated 7 March 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Azerbaijan, China, Colombia, France, Germany, Guatemala, India, Morocco, Pakistan, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, Togo, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2040 (2012).

I shall now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (spoke in Arabic): Mr. President, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak before the Security Council after the adoption of a new resolution on Libya, resolution 2040 (2012). It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the delegation of the United Kingdom on presiding over the Security Council during the month of March. I trust, Sir, that you and your delegation will lead the Council's proceedings to the optimal results.

The Security Council's adoption today of resolution 2040 (2012) is renewed evidence of the Council's support for the people of Libya. It is also evidence of the Council's keenness to maintain the security and stability of Libya at a historic juncture in its history as a nation. That is only natural because the stability of Libya and its prosperity as a democratic State will have a positive impact on security and peace in the wider region and the entire world.

We welcome the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya for an additional year, because the role of the Mission is indispensable in offering technical assistance and advice to Libya in the current critical transitional phase, especially since the new Libyan authorities have inherited a country that is almost devoid of State institutions. The authorities have inherited a State that has never experienced democracy in its contemporary history; a State that for more than two generations never witnessed elections; a State whose social fabric was torn apart by the dictatorial regime; a State that needs assistance in building its institutions and in securing justice and respect for human rights and national reconciliation; a State that needs its wounds healed so that it can go forth towards democracy, the rule of law, sustainable development and prosperity.

Since the inception of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and under the leadership of Mr. Ian Martin, the Libyan authorities have been met with understanding and responsiveness on the part of all members of the Mission. It has established strong ties with re-emerging civil society organizations. I take this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Ian Martin and his team. I affirm that the close working relationship that has been formed between the Mission and Libyan authorities will continue and grow stronger in the coming period, which will witness the

first democratic elections in the country since the 1960s.

The Libyan transitional authorities have started reconstituting the national army to take over the work that the revolutionary brigades have been doing until now. Those revolutionary factions have underscored their desire to hand over their weapons to a party that is reliable and capable of defending the homeland. All members of the revolutionary factions look forward to going back to their daily lives and to reintegrating the unemployed among them into the various State institutions. The latter is a measure that the transitional Government has started to implement.

As Council members know, Libya is a large country, with most of its borders in uninhabited areas in the desert. That will require providing the army with advanced equipment and weapons capable of monitoring the borders and safeguarding the homeland's security. Therefore, we have asked that the sanctions and arms embargo imposed by Security Council resolutions be lifted. Addressing the issue is not a short-term matter; rather, we expect that it will be dealt with through consultations between the Libyan authorities and Council members over the next few months.

I would like to confirm to Council members and the entire United Nations that there is nothing to fear from Libya — not in terms of national unity nor in terms of security threats — because our people are very aware of the critical nature of the current period and because our revolutionaries are courageous and can deflect any threat from the remnants of the former regime, which we no longer believe could threaten our security.

The Council has done a praiseworthy job in defending civilians in Libya. We believe that the unity of the Council, embodied in how it dealt with the situation in Libya, is necessary in order to preserve its credibility in addressing other, similar situations. We believe that the Security Council must always stand by peoples being subjected to killing and oppression by their rulers.

The President: The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 9.50 a.m.



Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

Provisional

6734th meeting

Monday, 12 March 2012, 9.50 a.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Hague	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Juppé
	Germany	Mr. Westerwelle
	Guatemala	Mr. Caballeros
	India	Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri
	Morocco	Mr. Loulichki
	Pakistan	Mr. Haroon
	Portugal	Mr. Portas
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	Togo	Mr. Menan
	United States of America	Mrs. Rodham Clinton

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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12-25973 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 9.50 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President: I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, Ministers and other representatives participating in this meeting. Their collective presence is an affirmation of the importance of the subject matter to be addressed.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: It is a great pleasure to welcome the Ministers attending this important meeting. I thank Foreign Secretary Hague for using the United Kingdom's presidency of the Security Council to focus on the dramatic developments that have taken place in the Middle East and that are still in motion as we speak.

The remarkable events of the past year have transformed the region and changed the world. We see a newly democratizing Tunisia — the country that produced the initial spark that has since spread far and wide. We see Libya putting decades of dictatorship behind it. We see Yemen with a newly elected President. And we see people across the region — women and young people in the vanguard — continuing to call for freedom and human rights, for dignity and opportunity, for accountable Government, and for an end to corruption and monopolies of wealth and power. The spontaneous and home-grown democratic movements are a credit to the Arab people.

But we must also recognize that the cost in human suffering and loss of life has been large. We have reached a sober moment. In Egypt, we continue to urge a peaceful and early transfer of power to a civilian Government. In Bahrain, there remains a need for an all-inclusive dialogue and meaningful reform process. In still other countries, people are standing up and battling their fears to call for more political empowerment and social justice.

In Syria, what started as a peaceful, popular call for long-denied democratic rights has turned into a

dangerous spiral of violence leading both Syria and the region into uncertainty. The Syrian Government has failed to fulfil its responsibility to protect its own people, and instead has subjected citizens in several cities to military assault and disproportionate use of force. These shameful operations continue. Sustained attacks against Idlib, Homs and elsewhere in the country have killed scores of people over the past couple of days, including women and children.

I thank the Security Council for supporting United Nations humanitarian efforts. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Valerie Amos, continues her efforts, following her visit to the country, to gain the unhindered access needed to respond to the devastation. The International Commission of Inquiry for Syria concluded that Syrian Government forces have committed widespread, systematic and gross human rights violations amounting to crimes against humanity.

And still the conflict deepens. Increasing numbers have fled internally or sought refuge in neighbouring countries. More groups are picking up arms. It is urgent for the international community to stop the violence. The General Assembly has spoken clearly in supporting the calls of the League of Arab States for a cessation of violence and a peaceful political solution. Together with Arab League Secretary-General Elaraby, I have asked former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to be our Joint Special Envoy and to use his good offices to facilitate urgent achievement of these goals. He will be assisted by Deputy Special Envoy Nasser Al-Kidwa.

As members will have followed closely, the Joint Special Envoy has just visited Syria over the weekend. Prior to that, he had intensive consultations with me and others in New York, as well as in Cairo with Secretary-General Elaraby and a wide range of ministers attending the Arab League ministerial meeting there. In Damascus, he met twice with President Al-Assad, with part of the opposition and with Syrian civil society, business and religious leaders. All interlocutors in Syria welcomed Mr. Annan's mission.

Mr. Annan held frank and comprehensive discussions with President Al-Assad, and put concrete proposals to the President. He urged President Al-Assad to take immediate steps to bring an end to violence and abuses, address the humanitarian crisis,

and embark with Mr. Annan's facilitation on a peaceful, inclusive, Syrian-led political process that would meet the legitimate and democratic aspirations of the Syrian people.

I add my voice to that of Mr. Annan in urging President Al-Assad to act swiftly, within the next few days, in response to the proposals put forward by the Joint Special Envoy. I appeal to the Security Council to unite strongly behind ending the violence and supporting Mr. Annan's mission to help Syria pull back from the brink of a deeper catastrophe. This is vital for the Syrian people and for the entire region.

I appreciate the recent initiatives of the Russian Federation and China, including their engagement with Syria and with the League of Arab States. At this crucial juncture, it will be essential for the Council to speak with one voice, and I hope that the Council can find its way towards adopting consensus resolution that sends a signal of strong resolve.

Let me also say a few words about the broader picture in the region going forward. I see five crucial points to bear in mind.

First, leaders must choose the path of meaningful reform, or make way for those who will. People do not want cosmetic changes that give only the merest taste of democracy. They want accountable governance and firm measures against corruption and cronyism.

Secondly, we must promote pluralism and protect the rights of minorities. Inclusive Government should be the watchword in the region's new democracies.

Thirdly, women have stood in the squares and streets demanding change, and now have a right to sit at the table, with real influence in decision-making and safe from violence, intimidation and abuse. The deficit in women's empowerment has held back the Arab region for too long.

Fourthly, we must create opportunities for young people. To absorb young entrants into the workforce, Arab countries need to create 50 million jobs within the next decade.

Fifthly, there must be regional peace. A regional awakening based on the ideals of freedom, dignity and non-violence cannot be complete without a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Yet, the past year has not brought about new momentum. The peace process continues to stagnate.

The situation in Gaza is yet again proving its unsustainability. I am gravely concerned about the latest escalation between Gaza and Israel. Once again, civilians are paying a terrible price. Rocket attacks from Gaza against Israeli civilian areas are unacceptable and must stop immediately. I reiterate my call on Israel to exercise maximum restraint.

I have appealed to Israeli and Palestinian leaders to embrace regional changes and to show the courage and vision needed to reach a historic agreement. Together with my Quartet partners, with whom I met this morning, we will remain engaged to assist the parties in forging a way ahead. We must create the conditions for meaningful negotiations that will resolve the core permanent status issues — namely, with regard to territory, security, refugees and Jerusalem — and end the occupation that started in 1967. That is the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace that will realize the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security.

The region would also benefit from an end to tensions rooted in concerns over Iran's nuclear programme. I urge all sides to exercise the utmost care and restraint, commit to diplomatic efforts in good faith and comply with all relevant resolutions of the Council.

Two decades ago, a previous generation rebelled against tyranny in Eastern Europe. The international community was quick to help. Today, the international community should engage once again. As we do so, it will be crucial to move beyond some of the assumptions that have often governed relationships between Arab countries and their partners. One damaging notion is that the Arab world is not ready for democracy; another is that security must take precedence over human rights.

Those assumptions have had the effect of keeping unrepresentative Governments in power, with little to show for democracy or security. The United Nations, too, must update its approach to the region. We are placing the full spectrum of our expertise and best practices at the disposal of the countries in transition. We are strongly committed to doing our part to enable a profoundly changing region to achieve peace and realize its potential.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I am grateful to the Secretary-General for his briefing.

It is an honour to preside over this special meeting of the Security Council on the Middle East. The United Kingdom has convened this meeting for two important reasons. The first is to call for intensified international efforts to support political and economic freedom in the Middle East while respecting the sovereignty of Arab nations. That includes meaningful assistance to Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Libya and they strive to make a success of their transitions. The second is to call once again for urgent, essential Security Council action to stem the bloodshed in Syria.

The Arab Spring, as it has become known, is already the most significant event of the early twenty-first century, with deep implications for international peace and security. It is therefore right that it is debated by the Security Council. Some people regard it with fear and consternation, but in Britain we view it in a strongly positive light. It raises the prospect of the greatest enlargement of human freedom since the end of the Cold War, and of a Middle East that in 20-years' time could be made up of open, prosperous and stable societies. If this scenario were also to include peace between Israelis and Palestinians — a need underlined by the events in and around Gaza over the past few days — and include a negotiated settlement of the nuclear crisis with Iran, then the case for helping it become a reality is even stronger.

But if, instead, we turn away from the region, if we downgrade our expectations and allow pessimism to prevail, if we send a signal that repression and violence will be tolerated, or if we allow Syria to descend into civil war or to remain convulsed by violence, then immense opportunities will be squandered and some of the worst fears about the region's future could be realized.

We can see today positive developments that seemed unthinkable two years ago — such as in Tunisia, the first democratically elected Parliament since the 1950s, with 24 per cent of the seats held by women; in Libya, a new Government after 40 years of one-man rule; and in Morocco, freer elections under a

new Constitution. Some of those countries face immense challenges, and there will be setbacks as well as progress in the years ahead.

But that strengthens the case for helping Arab nations to build their institutions, open up their economies and create strong civil societies, where such assistance is requested. Britain is doing its part in that regard. Our Arab partnership initiative is supporting projects in 10 different countries. The international community can do more on an even greater scale, through international financial institutions, the Group of Eight and regional organizations. The European Union has made a bold offer of support to the region, which must now be implemented in full.

We believe that, as we build on those efforts, we should be guided by three clear principles. The first is that demands for human rights and freedom are universal and will spread by themselves over time, because they are fundamental human aspirations. That is not a new concept; it was enshrined in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly 64 years ago. It is a truth that Governments ignore at their peril. And it is proven by the experience of many countries.

The Arab Spring reconfirms what history warns, that when Governments respond with an iron fist to the irrepressible dreams, legitimate demands and unconquerable hopes of their citizens, they are doomed to fail in the long term. Repression is a policy of failure, and it cannot build stability. All Governments in the region should embrace peaceful reform and make decisive moves in the direction of greater political and economic freedom. If not, we may see more of the violent ruptures that can follow when people demand rights that no amount of coercion will ever persuade them to abandon.

The second fundamental principle is that we cannot dictate change from the outside, nor would we want to. There is no one model of democracy, and so it is for the people of each country in the region to determine their future in accordance with their different cultures, traditions and political systems. But no Government anywhere in the world can justify violence against its people or say that the fundamental democratic principle — the right of citizens to choose and to change their representatives — does not apply in its country.

In Britain we will always stand for that vital principle. And so we must also respect the choices that Arab citizens make through the ballot box. That includes being prepared to work with new elected groups that draw their inspiration from Islam, while holding them to the same high standards of non-violence, respect for human rights and willingness to respect the outcome of future elections that are expected of others.

The third principle is that economic and political reform go hand-in-hand. Economic success is essential to support stability and prosperity. But, equally, there can be no long-term stability without greater political openness.

Finally, the Arab Spring will be the work of a generation. We must show strategic patience in not turning away from the region.

But all those good intentions will count for nothing if we cannot stand by our values or meet our responsibility in the most urgent crisis today. The situation in Syria casts a long shadow over this debate. In the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the world, the Council has so far failed in its responsibilities towards the Syrian people. It has failed to address the brutal oppression of peaceful protesters by the Syrian regime. It has not yet put its weight and authority behind the efforts of the League of Arab States. It is time for the Security Council to show unity and leadership.

It should be possible for the Council to call for an immediate end to the brutal repression and violations of human rights. It should be possible for the Council to demand an end to all violence and to call for immediate and unhindered humanitarian access; to call on the Syrian Government to implement its own commitments to the League of Arab States by stopping military action, withdrawing its forces from towns and cities, releasing all political prisoners and allowing access to the media; to endorse the work of the Arab League and of Kofi Annan in his role as United Nations-Arab League Joint Special Envoy; and to support United Nations and Arab League facilitation of a Syrian-led political transition. I call again on the Council to adopt a resolution containing those essential elements.

Beyond this Chamber, British experts are working in Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon to help document crimes against the Syrian people. I urge

other nations represented here to join us in that effort so that the regime knows it cannot proceed down its path with impunity.

Not all countries here regard the Arab Spring in the same light, but we have a shared responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and an immense common interest in working together. That was the very reason the United Nations was first created, and we should act together in that spirit now, not only in stemming bloodshed in Syria but also in long-term support to that vital region.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor the other members of the Security Council.

Mr. Juppé (France) (*spoke in French*): The United Nations Charter entrusts to the Security Council the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The Organization also recognizes the sovereignty of nations and non-interference as fundamental principles. In 2005, the evolution of our work led us to recognize that the Council had the obligation to act when the responsibility to protect was not assured and when gross violations of human rights took place before our eyes, and that Governments were accountable for acts of commission and omission alike.

That is the context in which we hold today's meeting, and I thank the United Kingdom for its initiative in calling it. It is an opportunity for us to consider what the Council can and should do to help make the Arab Spring a force for peace and security in the region and the world.

For more than a year, the Arab world has seen unprecedented sweeping changes. With extraordinary courage Tunisians, Egyptians, Libyans, Yemenis and Syrians have braved oppression to demand their rights. With admirable determination they have arisen to call for their legitimate rights to freedom, human dignity and democracy. France sees that thrust attests to the universal aspiration to democracy, confirming yet again the lessons of history that regimes that squelch their people's voices have no future, and that sooner or later Governments that stifle human rights end up crumbling.

The Security Council would not have known about the situations in question but for the fact that a number of them had degenerated under the obstinacy

of archaic Governments. In Tunisia and Egypt, the people themselves gained the ouster of discredited authorities and the beginnings of democratic processes — not without difficulty, but nevertheless without unleashing bloodbaths. In Jordan and Morocco, the political authorities bravely chose dialogue, reform and elections. I was in Morocco only a few days ago, and that country is a hopeful example for the entire region.

Of course, nothing has been settled once and for all. Of course, as we all know, every democratic revolution carries in itself the risk of disappointment and retrogression. We all know that democratic transitions take time. But history is on the march, and the changes sweeping the Arab world are an opportunity for the region — and for peace.

Libya, meanwhile, was not as fortunate, and the Council's obligation immediately became clear. The Libyan people rose up against a dictator and a regime determined to drown its hopes for freedom in blood. On 26 February 2011, in an expression of universal condemnation, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1970 (2011), imposing sanctions and calling on the International Criminal Court to deal with the brutal repression, which its Prosecutor classified as a crime against humanity. In the face of a dictator threatening to massacre the population of Benghazi, regional organizations, led by the League of Arab States, but also including the African Union, called on the Security Council to act. That was the reason for resolution 1973 (2011), which France fought tirelessly for.

France is proud to have played a part in the adoption of that resolution. We strongly believe that in it the Council collectively made the only right and honourable decision. With that resolution, we saved thousands of lives and protected the Libyan population. Because of it, Benghazi will go down in history not as a town of martyrdom but as a symbol of freedom. I want to affirm unequivocally that to call into question the legitimacy and legality of our actions, and to insinuate that they themselves were tantamount to criminal acts — despite all evidence to the contrary, as the Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry confirmed yet again — is an utter distortion of history and an insult to all Libyans who bravely fought to win their freedom. Today, in adopting resolution 2040 (2012) to extend the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the Council has continued to

shoulder its responsibility for helping the country to build the rule of law and the foundations of its progress towards democracy.

In Yemen, the Council has also met its obligations. The unanimous adoption of resolution 2014 (2011) last October led to a peaceful transfer of power, based on the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council. After months of crises and conflicts, a national unity Government was established, a new President was elected with wide support, and tensions were eased. Of course, not all problems have been solved, but a new era of Yemeni history has dawned. In both cases, the Council acted effectively because it answered not only the calls of populations but also those of regional organizations, which provided clarity and pointed the way to political solutions.

Today, the Council is faced with a tragedy in Syria. For the past year, ever since the first large peaceful demonstration took place in Dar'a on 18 March 2011, the situation has grown more unacceptable every day. Deaf to the voice of its people and to all the appeals of the international community, including those of the Arab League and its close partners, the regime has plunged into ever more bloody repression and ever more brutal violence. That headlong rush has been unequivocally condemned in the strongest possible terms by the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the report of the Commission of Inquiry, whose indictment of the regime is overwhelming, and which again today confirms that crimes against humanity are taking place.

The urgent necessity is clearly to stop the violence and to secure the population's access to humanitarian aid. Ms. Amos will soon give the Council an account of her visit, and she has already said that she is horrified by what she has seen. We are already familiar with the criminal acts, violence and horrors that Syrian civilians live with every day. Like Hama 30 years ago, Homs will live in human history as a town whose martyrdom haunts our memory.

Only a political response to the legitimate hopes of the people and the enactment of the reforms so loudly called for will lead to a resolution of the Syrian crisis. That will be possible by means of a transition based on the plan proposed by the League of Arab States on 22 January, with the broad support of the international community, as evidenced by General Assembly resolution 66/253 of 16 February and the

4 February Security Council vote. No other peaceful solution is possible.

As I stressed before the Human Rights Council a few days ago, the Syrian regime's crimes must not go unpunished. The day will come when that country's civil and military authorities will have to answer for their actions in court. We should set in motion an action by the International Criminal Court.

Let us make no mistake. The Council has a historic responsibility for the crisis in Syria. We have the obligation to put an end to the gross violations of human rights and the downward spiral that threatens the peace in Lebanon and the region. By failing to act, we are abandoning the oppressed to their oppressors and the Syrian people to violence and brutality. Every day we fail to act, we are letting civil war gain yet more ground over a peaceful solution. To be a member of the Council is to be firmly engaged in the cause of world peace and security. It is also to place the common good above all other considerations. It is our responsibility to act — and to act now — to finally put an end to the martyrdom of the Syrian people and allow them to regain control of their own future.

A draft resolution is being discussed to respond to the emergency and to find a credible solution to the ever worsening crisis. I say again today what I said on 31 January (see S/PV.6710). It is unacceptable for the Council to be prevented from assuming its responsibilities. Let us all support Kofi Annan's mission and the Arab League plan. After months of deadlock, I call on China and Russia to heed the voices of the Arab people and the global conscience, and to join us.

Acting in favour of freedom for the Libyan, Yemeni and Syrian peoples puts in sharp relief the issue of the impotence of the Security Council in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In the Middle East there is another people whose aspirations must be recognized. Are the claims of the Palestinians not as legitimate as those expressed in the rest of the region? Is it not natural for Palestinians to wish for a Palestinian State to emerge? The security of the Israeli State must also be ensured. France will always stand by Israel to guarantee its security and will not compromise. Today, we all know that the solution of two States living side by side in peace and security is the only viable one and the best guarantee of Israel's security.

After so many repeated failures of the peace process and so many years of suffering and disappointed hopes, the time has come to change method. That is the very direction of the appeal to the General Assembly launched by President Sarkozy on 21 September 2011 (see A/66/PV.11). We are convinced that we can no longer continue to do without a multilateral forum as such, that of the Council, and the support of all partners, in particular regional and European. In the coming months, France will do everything in its power so that a just and lasting peace is at last established in the Middle East.

In talking of peace and security in that region of the world, how can we not mention Iran? In that country, the situation is becoming a little more worrying every day with a regime that is pursuing a nuclear programme that is clearly military, in violation of the decisions of the Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency, that vows to erase Israel from the map, that undermines freedom of movement in the Strait of Hormuz, that is of concern to its neighbours, that oppresses the aspirations of its people to freedom and democracy, and that daily isolates itself a little further from the international community.

The Council has spoken firmly and must remain resolute, as we know that there are two equally unacceptable outcomes: a nuclear Iran or a bombed Iran.

In recalling the peaceful revolutions and developments under way on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, what the tragedy taking place in Syria proves to us is that the principle of legitimacy is fundamental to any Government. The day when a Government loses its legitimacy in the eyes of its people, it is doomed. In that region of the world, one of the major questions being asked is that of the possibility of ensuring that communities and minorities live together in national unity, respectful of the mutual rights of the individual and human rights for all. The promise of the Arab Spring is the universal right to freedom, and I have confidence in its achievement.

Mr. Caballeros (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the United Kingdom for having organized this meeting and we appreciate your gesture, Mr. President, in presiding over it. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for his presentation to us.

I must say that the theme chosen for our debate today, while captivating, poses a great challenge.

Unlike other very specific topics that we have discussed in the past and that give rise to more or less definite reactions, on this occasion the United Kingdom has proposed to us a more general topic that runs the risk of diluting any message that we would wish to convey.

It would be presumptuous on our part to offer interpretations on the significance of what has come to be called the Arab Spring, whose model vision, which captured the world's attention, took place in Cairo's Tahrir Square in January 2011. The people's extraordinary courage, their calmness, their solidarity, the persistence of their demands and their peaceful nature, in particular, were a source of inspiration for all humankind. While taking note of the huge difference between those singular events compared to the transitions that occurred in my own region between 1980 and 1990, from authoritarian regimes to democratically elected civilian Governments, I would like to respond to the challenge that you have posed to us, Mr. President, with a brief comment on lessons learned from our own experiences that may contribute some tangible inputs to today's debate. With a certain modesty and aware of the great historical, cultural, religious and political differences existing between our respective regions, even within them, I draw on the changes in my own country to mention seven points.

First, each case in Latin America was unique, and certainly each situation in the Middle East will also be so. For example, in my own country, we faced the need to adopt a project for a multi-ethnic, pluricultural and multilingual nation, responding to the specific realities of Guatemala, which are not necessarily the same as those of other countries in Latin America. That is why, although it sounds trite to say that there are no universally valid formulas for transitions, while democratic values are similar everywhere, their concrete expression in terms of internal organization, juridical and institutional arrangements and forms of popular participation can vary greatly from one situation to another.

Secondly, cultural values matter, in particular in multi-ethnic societies that seek to build a nation where mutual respect and tolerance prevail. Such cultural values must be compatible with democratic societies and commitments to economic and social development. By way of example, it is important that everyone, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, local affiliation, race or creed, has access to the same opportunities. I

am pleased to affirm that such values have been established and strengthened in our region, and trust that the same will happen in the countries that are the subject of our debate.

Thirdly, progress is clearly not linear. It is not easy to build plural and participatory systems of governance where there is no fully established democratic culture. It requires the strengthening, and sometimes the creation, of institutions in various areas, including a firm constitutional and legal basis, the development of representative political parties and the guarantee of freedom of expression. The agenda is complex. It involves vested interests, often gives rise to unforeseen consequences and from time to time requires changes of direction. What is important is to persevere and trust that age-old cultures that have contributed so much to the civilized world will find the strength, creativity and leadership to bring their democratization to fruition.

That brings me to my fourth point. Democratization processes must respond to the aspirations, and have the consent of, the peoples and national societies concerned. They must be the product of a sense of ownership akin to national consensus, not something imposed from outside. Achieving a model with which the citizenship feels comfortable often involves long periods of trial and adjustment, which only confirms my previous points that we are dealing with long-term processes. Those processes only respond to the wishes of their own citizens. Also, representative democracy requires that citizens have confidence in the Governments that they elect.

Fifthly, today it is fashionable in the United Nations to talk about the rule of law — a topic that did not figure as prominently on our agenda a few years ago. From the perspective of my own country, I would like to affirm the crucial importance of having solid institutions that combat impunity and lack of transparency in the management of public finances and, in general, the administration of justice. We foresaw that in our peace accords, but state it more directly in addressing the threat posed to the rule of law in our country by the appearance of transnational criminal cartels. Combating that scourge requires strengthening our capacity in criminal prosecution, our judicial system, our civil police and even our prison system. The same will certainly be true for the democratization processes under way in the Middle East.

Sixthly, in the case of Latin America, in general, and Central America, in particular, the transition to democracy was accompanied by a strong boost to interregional cooperation. The emergence of Governments with shared values facilitated agreements and fostered regionalism. In our case, cooperating to resolve common problems and promoting mutual support strengthened democracy in each country and contributed to its joint defence. We believe that that phenomenon of cooperation is relevant to the countries that are the subject of our debate today, which is already taking shape in the increasing role played by the League of Arab States.

Lastly, let us not forget the imperative of promoting economic and social development. It is true that people seek freedom and dignity, but they also demand greater well-being, in particular in societies marked by high levels of inequality. It is interesting to note that, in accordance with the main source of public opinion polling in our region, *Latinobarómetro*, there is a close correlation between economic performance and the level of satisfaction with democracy. Seemingly, the population not only aspires but also demands that more plural and representative Governments generate tangible benefits for the citizens. When that does not happen, the rate of satisfaction with democratic institutions falls dramatically.

The so-called Arab Spring evokes feelings that are, overall, of a positive nature. That is why I have concentrated more on the opportunities than on the challenges in my statement. That is also why I have deliberately avoided touching on other topics that some would consider obligatory when discussing the Middle East, such as the imperative of ending the conflict between Israel and Palestine or the situation in Syria, since we have addressed those matters in other meetings of the Council.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The transformation processes that have agitated the Middle East and North Africa reflect the understandable aspirations of the peoples of those countries, which deserve our support, for a better life, increased opportunities for self-expression, participation in political life and greater economic and social benefits. Those processes are still far from over, and it is difficult to make clear predictions about their prospects, since sometimes they are accompanied by painful civilizational, ethnic, religious, economic and political rifts that create problems in terms of regional security.

The goal for the international community is to help ensure that those transformations do more good than harm to the Arab world. The priority is to ensure that the changes are peaceful and democratic and that fundamental freedoms, human rights and the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, including, of course, the rights of Christians, are respected. We follow with empathy the process of democratic State-building in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco; the efforts of the Government of Yemen to stabilize the situation in combating terrorism; and the efforts of the transitional Government of Libya to restore normal life to the country, prepare for elections and disarm insurgent groups. We are providing valued humanitarian assistance and stand ready to help in economic recovery. For all members of the Council, the international dimension of the continued Arab Spring is of primary interest.

We believe that we can already draw some conclusions. First of all, whatever goals might be set in any given situation, they cannot be achieved by misleading the international community or manipulating Security Council decisions. Otherwise, the credibility of the Council is diminished and trust among its members eroded, which undermines the ability of the Council to take decisions in the future.

Secondly, those organizations or countries that take it upon themselves to implement Security Council mandates must give a full account of their actions to the Council. That also applies to NATO, which, as all members know, offered to secure a 'no-fly zone in Libya, but in reality engaged in massive bombings. It is sad that there has as yet been no investigation following up information about civilian casualties caused by those bombings. We believe that the Secretary-General should bring clarity to the matter by invoking the 2008 Joint Declaration on United Nations/NATO Secretariat Cooperation.

Thirdly, interference from the outside using brute military force increases the threat of the illicit spread of arms, thus jeopardizing the stability of the region. We will need to take serious decisions regarding the situation in Syria. It remains a cause for grave concern to Russia and the entire international community. Making hasty demands for regime change, imposing unilateral sanctions designed to trigger economic difficulties and social tensions in the country, inducing the opposition to continue its confrontation with authorities instead of promoting dialogue, and calling

for support of armed confrontation and even for foreign military intervention are all risky recipes for geopolitical engineering that can only result in the spread of conflict.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the Syrian authorities bear a huge share of responsibility for the current situation. But one should not ignore the fact that for a long time now they have been fighting not unarmed men, but combat units, including the so-called Free Syrian Army and extremist groups, including Al-Qaida, which have recently committed a series of murderous terrorist acts. If our absolute priority and sincere wish is to immediately put an end to the violence and provide humanitarian assistance to the civilian population, then at this stage we should not be talking about who started the conflict, but rather discuss realistic and feasible approaches that would allow us to achieve a ceasefire as a priority.

From the outset our approach has been clear and consistent, aimed at finding an early solution to the Syrian crisis without violence, through Syrian-led inclusive political dialogue and the implementation of long-due reforms. The following five principles of settlement that Russia and the League of Arab States agreed upon on 10 March are based on that same spirit: first, the end of violence on the part of all sides; secondly, an impartial monitoring mechanism; thirdly, no outside interference; fourthly, unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance to all Syrians; and, fifthly, strong support for Kofi Annan's mission aimed at launching political dialogue between the Government and all opposition groups, as mandated by the terms of reference endorsed by the Secretary-General and the Arab League. On that basis, we are prepared to agree to a Security Council resolution, as we were ready to do last autumn when our draft resolution was put forth. Sadly, it was not supported by all Security Council members.

The Arab Spring should in no way be used as a pretext to diminish attention to the Palestinian issue. We are convinced that the potential for conflict in the Middle East and North Africa will remain high until a comprehensive settlement is achieved in the Middle East within the existing international legal framework. This is a truly historic obligation for the international community and the Security Council.

Unfortunately, the trends we have been witnessing lately delay rather than hasten this prospect,

both in political terms — when the settlement parameters that have been repeatedly endorsed by the Security Council, the Quartet and the parties themselves are called into question — and in practical terms too, when the settlement activity of Israel in the West Bank is literally shrinking the area available for the necessary agreements.

A particular concern is the violation of the ceasefire following the resurgence in strikes between Israel and the Gaza Strip, in which civilians are suffering on both sides. Under those circumstances, the international community must step up its efforts. That applies above all to the Quartet, which, as we discussed with our colleagues before the start of today's meeting, should start working in a focused manner and on a regular basis to create an environment conducive to continuing direct Israeli-Palestinian contacts aimed at full-fledged negotiations. We all welcome the initiative of Jordan, which held a series of very useful meetings between the Israelis and the Palestinians in Amman this January, and we want that initiative to be continued.

Russia also confirms our proposal for closer cooperation between the Quartet and the relevant structures of the League of Arab States. We are confident that the Arab Peace Initiative remains relevant and that its comprehensive implementation will ensure the creation of a Palestinian State, guarantee the security of Israel and establish peace and stability throughout the Middle East. Russia is prepared to engage in close cooperation with all responsible members of the international community in order to attain those goals.

Mrs. Rodham Clinton (United States of America): Today we gather to discuss the wave of change that has swept the Middle East and North Africa. While each country's experience has been unique, all of those democratic movements have sprung from a common desire for rights, freedom, economic hope and human dignity. Those universal aspirations are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Charter of the United Nations, and they are fundamental to my country's identity and history and to those of many countries. Those principles and the people who struggle to realize them in their own societies deserve and demand our collective support. We are inspired by the courage of the people of the region, as they have shown their

determination to move forward, and we believe that their efforts should be supported.

Now I approach these conversations with a healthy dose of humility, because we know that those revolutions are not ours. They are not by us, for us or against us. But we also know that as the international community, we have the resources and capabilities to support those who seek peaceful, meaningful democratic change. We must also have the will.

Of course, change is unfolding in different ways and in different places, and in each unique case our tools have to be matched with the circumstances. Here at the Security Council, three cases in particular demand our attention today. Let me start with Libya and the encouraging vote this morning (see S/PV.6733) to renew and update the United Nations Support Mission in Libya. Last year the Council, backed by the Arab League and countries around the world, acted to support the Libyan people at the hour of their greatest need. Today's vote reflects our continued commitment to Libya and its transitional Government, which has made tremendous strides. It also reflects the recognition that our work is not yet done.

We will continue to aid UNSMIL's efforts to support the Libyan Government as it reintegrates those who took up arms in the name of change into a professional national army and a peaceful society. We will continue helping Libya secure its borders against proliferation, trafficking and extremism, while treating refugees and migrants humanely. After so much courage and sacrifice from the Libyan people, we are proud to help Libya build a new foundation for the rule of law and respect for human rights.

Just last week, Prime Minister El-Keib was here in the Security Council (see S/PV.6731), where he forcefully and eloquently defended the Security Council's assistance on behalf of the aspirations of the Libyan people to chart their own futures.

I do not think there is any additional comment that any of us need to add to the record as to the appropriate measures taken by the Security Council in furtherance of the resolutions authorizing action. We also met with Prime Minister El-Keib in Washington, D.C., where we discussed Libya's progress in paving the way for fair and free elections, as well as our work together on security, student exchanges, civil society and medical care for Libya's war-wounded. Ultimate success for

Libya will not be the death of a dictator, but the birth of a successful, stable and free nation.

The second case is Yemen. As Yemen unravelled into violence last year, the Security Council stood behind the efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Yemeni stakeholders to find a peaceful solution. In the face of setbacks, we held firm.

Many challenges lie ahead. But last month's successful presidential election and inauguration were promising steps on the path towards a new democratic chapter in Yemen's history. As Yemen continues its multi-year transition, reforms its Constitution, convenes a national dialogue and continues to grapple with its security and humanitarian challenges, we must remain engaged and supportive.

The third case is Syria. Five weeks ago, the Council was unable to stand united against the horrific campaign of violence that has shocked the conscience of the world — one that continues unabated as we meet. We were blocked from even condemning the violence and endorsing a peaceful plan developed by Syria's own neighbours.

The United States believes firmly in the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Member States. But we do not believe that sovereignty demands that the Council stand silent when Governments massacre their own people, threatening regional peace and security in the process. We reject any equivalence between premeditated murders by a Government's military regime and the actions of civilians under siege who have been driven to self-defence. How cynical it was to see that even as Al-Assad was receiving former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the Syrian army was conducting a fresh assault on Idlib and continuing its aggression in Hamah, Homs and Rastan.

We took note of the fact that this past weekend, in Cairo, the Arab League and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov agreed on the need for an end of violence, for full, unimpeded humanitarian access and for a political process led by Kofi Annan and based on the terms of the Arab League and General Assembly resolutions.

We believe that now is the time for all nations, even those that have previously blocked our efforts, to stand behind the humanitarian and political approach spelled out by the Arab League. The international community should say with one voice, without hesitation or caveat, that the killings of innocent

Syrians must stop and a political transition must begin. The Syrian people deserve the same opportunity to shape their future that the Tunisians, Egyptians, Libyans and Yemenis now enjoy. Our work here in the Security Council is just one part of what the international community must do to assist democratic transitions all across the Middle East and North Africa.

We must support calls from within the region to strengthen each of the building blocks of stable, thriving societies: a responsive, accountable Government, an energetic, effective economy and a vibrant civil society. Politically, many countries, including a number seated at this table, have unique, first-hand expertise in how to build durable democracies. And I appreciate the comments of the Foreign Minister of Guatemala. Those are lessons we can and should share.

Where countries are making gradual reforms, we should offer our support and everywhere we must safeguard, in word and action, the basic principles of democracy and universal human rights.

I know that today there are those who question whether Islamist politics can really be compatible with democratic and universal principles and rights. The people of the Arab Spring have a chance to answer that question. Our policy is to focus less on what names parties call themselves by and more on what they choose to do. All political parties, religious and secular alike, have a responsibility to their people to abide by the basic tenets upon which this body is founded: to reject violence; to uphold the rule of law; to respect the freedoms of speech, association and assembly; to safeguard religious freedom and tolerance; to protect the rights of women and minorities; to establish independent judiciaries; to promote a free press; to surrender power if defeated at the polls; and to avoid inciting conflicts that pull societies apart. Those are standards against which we should all be measured, and we need to commit to upholding them together.

Our experience elsewhere in the world has taught us that successful political transitions are those that quickly deliver economic results, especially job opportunities and the hope for a better future. To succeed, the Arab political awakening must also be an economic awakening.

Governments across the region that share those priorities will need to keep making the sometimes

difficult policy choices required to build a foundation for inclusive, private sector-led growth.

As President of this year's Group of Eight, America is continuing the work of the Deauville Partnership, which was started by France, to promote regional integration, economic participation, job creation and stabilization.

The last of these is especially pressing. The international community must provide strong support for the International Monetary Fund so as to quickly conclude an economic reform and stabilization programme with Egypt. We call on Egypt's friends in the region and around the world to be prepared to use bilateral assistance to reinforce an IMF programme with Egypt. Those efforts, both economic and political, must, of course, include women. I thank the Secretary-General for making that one of the five points he cited. No transition can succeed with half of the population left behind.

Durable democracy depends on civil society, and we are proud to support individuals and organizations seeking to improve their own societies.

Again, I know that there are those who say that the concept of civil society is a Western imposition. But after 2011, how can anyone honestly say that civil society is not indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa and, I would add, everywhere. We know that lasting change comes from within. Societies must be the authors of their own futures. But the international community can provide tools that will help societies reach those goals.

As new elected legislatures abolish old laws intended to control civil liberties, we should continue our collective support for measures that will protect and nurture civil society, consistent with the international human rights norms of free association, assembly and expression. No one in the region is exempt from the demands for change we have seen. When a country like Iran claims to champion those principles in the region and then brutally suppresses its own people and supports suppression in Syria and other places, its hypocrisy is clear to all.

President Obama and I have been consistent in our belief that the Palestinian people, like their Arab neighbours, Israelis and all people, deserve dignity, liberty and the right to decide their own future. They deserve a viable, independent Palestine alongside a

secure Israel. We know from decades in the diplomatic trenches that the only way to get there is through a negotiated peace, one that cannot be dictated from outside and one that we will continue to pursue through every productive avenue, including a Quartet consultation this morning.

Let me also condemn in the strongest terms the rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israel, which continued over the weekend. We call on those responsible to take immediate action to stop those attacks. We call on both sides — all sides — to make every effort to restore calm.

Finally and crucially, we have to recognize that the most consequential choices are the ones that will be faced in the months ahead. It is up to the people and leaders of the region to resist the calls of demagogues, to compromise and build coalitions, to keep faith in their system even when they lose at the polls, and to protect the principles and institutions that ultimately will protect them. Every democracy has to guard against those who would hijack its freedoms for their own ignoble ends. Building prosperous democratic societies is not the job of a day, a week or even a year. It is a continuous commitment and one we share. We as a community of nations must help the people of the Middle East and North Africa to make the most of the rights and freedoms for which they have risked so much.

Mr. Portas (Portugal): Thank you, Sir, for organizing this very important, appropriate and timely debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his important statement.

The popular uprisings that led to the so-called Arab Spring represent the most powerful transformation in world politics since the fall of the Berlin wall. Although unpredicted, those changes prove an old rule of politics — failure to reform leads to revolution. Political leaderships that lose the sense of history are bound to be on the wrong side of history. For too long, the world condoned autocratic regimes, looked away from the repression of their own citizens, and turned a deaf ear to the calls for freedom and for the respect of basic human rights.

The upheavals in Tunisia and Egypt shook the foundations of that paradigm, and the notorious massacre in Benghazi stirred the international community into action in defence of the values and objectives of the United Nations. Those were popular-

led processes. Coming 10 years after 9/11, they were not instigated from the outside, or by Al-Qaida, which is politically very significant.

What is happening across the Arab world offers a unique opportunity both for the countries of the region and for the world at large. Those countries have the chance to elect democratic Governments, foster the rule of law, protect and promote human rights, value the role of women, respect minorities and achieve widespread economic and social progress.

The international community must also seize this opportunity to advance the principles of the United Nations that we all share, and thus to strengthen the conditions for a more peaceful, prosperous and stable international order. In order to do so, we must be clear in our aims and principles, while striving to avoid old mistakes. Let me mention some of the principles that frame Portugal's perspective.

First, continued ownership of the process by the peoples concerned is essential. We are witnessing home-grown, popular-led processes that are the result of the courage and the will for change of those societies. We should be humbled by their example and we should listen, understand and offer our help where and when support is required from us.

Secondly, each country is an individual case and must respond to different challenges. We must recognize existing differences. There is no one-size-fits-all model.

Thirdly, we must resist the temptation to try to export political models. Human rights are universal; political models are specific. It is up to voters in each country to choose their own future, and we must accept without reservation the results of credible, fair and transparent electoral processes.

Fourthly, we must recognize the participation of Islamic parties in Governments as natural to the political process. In democratic societies, parties will be judged by the people according to their performance and capacity to deliver on the expectations of their citizens.

Fifthly, religious freedom is essential to human dignity. We must not judge others on the basis of our own religious, social or cultural beliefs, and we expect the same from others. We must distinguish faith from fanaticism.

Sixthly, building a democratic society takes time and patience. It is a path paved with tensions and often with contradictions. We Portuguese learned that through our own experience some decades ago.

Finally, the broad institutional, cultural, ethnic and spiritual diversity of several of the societies currently experiencing such historical and profound change may give rise to specific tensions and security concerns. Therefore, the social cohesion and territorial integrity of those countries must be constantly at the forefront of our concerns.

Regrettably and flagrantly, one country has become a tragedy: Syria. As in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya or Yemen, the Syrian people peacefully demanded the legitimate fulfilment of their basic rights. Nevertheless, as we speak, the ruthless campaign of repression against the civilian population of Syria is continuing. For a year now, women, men and children have been massively and indiscriminately killed by their own State security forces. Human rights, including the basic right to humanitarian assistance, are being systematically violated on a large scale.

The international community has clearly voiced its strong condemnation of those actions through the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Group of Friends of Syria, which enjoys large and widespread participation. Al-Assad's regime remains deaf to all those calls. Reforms were promised; none was credibly implemented.

We regret that the Security Council has not yet been able to take a forceful, unified position to end the violence and make way for a Syrian-led political process reflecting the Arab League proposals. How many more thousands of dead will it take for the Council to meet its responsibilities? How long will we sit silent while the Syrian regime pushes the country into bloody sectarian conflict and civil war?

The unprecedented appointment of Mr. Kofi Annan, a former Secretary-General and a Nobel laureate, as Joint Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States represents the will of the international community to put an end to the suffering of the Syrian people. His mission represents the last opportunity to prevent Syria from spiralling into civil war.

I therefore urge the Council and appeal to all its members to unite in public and full support of Mr. Annan and the objectives he has outlined, in accordance with the General Assembly resolution (resolution 66/253) for an end to all violence, full access to humanitarian aid and the launching of a Syrian-led inclusive political process.

The profound changes taking place around the Arab world render the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian question even more urgent. Palestinians have the right to their independent State, living in peace and security alongside Israel. Palestinians have prepared themselves to fully and efficiently run their own State, and that has been acknowledged by the international community at large. Fulfilling the legitimate ambitions of both sides can only be attained through serious and credible negotiations between the two parties that take into account the rightful concerns of each side.

We all know that the solution lies in the framework of the parameters; what is lacking is political will. We need concrete and tangible actions that bring Israelis and Palestinians back to the negotiation table to engage in the substance and to accept a precise calendar, as proposed by the Quartet on the Middle East and the Arab Peace Initiative. Europeans have a particular responsibility in this context, and we must play an active role to break the present deadlock. Tensions are mounting and time is quickly running out. If a new surge in violence is to be avoided, both parties and the international community must act promptly.

Rampant settlement activity, demolitions of Palestinian homes and displacement of innocent people continue. They are illegal. They undermine the Palestinian institutions and leaders. They increase frustration and create an explosive mix. We appeal to Israel to stop those activities, as they fatally threaten the viability of any mutually agreed political solution. Israel has legitimate security concerns, but they can only be fully addressed in an efficient way through a negotiated settlement.

Portugal is committed to working together with our Arab neighbours and friends, to whom we are linked by centuries of mutual acquaintance, shared history and common purpose. We will do it bilaterally and within the framework of the United Nations and the European Union. The work ahead is immense but I

believe that, collectively, we will prevail in on path to freedom, justice and democracy.

Mr. Westerwelle (Germany): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this initiative and for your leadership. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

Change has come to the Arab world. It has come because the peoples in the region, especially the youth, have stood up for freedom, participation and dignity. I want to congratulate the peoples of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, as well as those of Morocco, Yemen and Jordan, on the progress they have made, each in their own way.

The League of Arab States has responded to calls for reform. We applaud the constructive role it has played over the past 12 months.

The changes in the Arab world reflect a beginning globalization of values. People all over the world are demanding their universal human rights. The values of the United Nations are gaining ground. We are still only at the beginning but, in the long term, all the people of the region will benefit. And so will we, as their neighbours in the European Union. As neighbours, we are ready to help.

Germany took an early decision to assist the countries in transition. Our support is guided by three principles. First, reform must come from within. We stand ready to support countries that choose democratic change. Secondly, no two countries in the Arab world are alike. Each country must choose its own path and find its own pace. Finally, we know that the road to democracy is not linear. It is a difficult passage, which requires patience and persistence.

Liberty and democracy require a promising economic perspective. We have offered transformation partnerships to all countries in question. We stand ready to support them with know-how, investments and open markets in Europe. A focus of our international support should be on education. A good education for the youth is the key for any future economic success.

Many in the West fear the rise of political Islam. But the notion that Islam and democracy are incompatible is wrong. We have engaged in dialogue with democratic Islamic parties.

We are ready to respect cultural transitions. At the same time, we are looking for clear commitments to human rights and to the rule of law, to a pluralistic

society, to respect for minorities, to religious tolerance and to domestic and external peace.

Women have been a driving force for change in the region; we urge all partners in transition to strengthen their rights.

The changes in the region have made it even more urgent to make progress towards a two-State solution for Israel and Palestine. I therefore welcome the meeting of the Quartet principals today. All parties must do everything to ease tensions and to avoid an escalation on the ground. I am deeply worried about the flare up of violence around Gaza. The shelling with rockets of innocent people is unacceptable and must stop.

The Iranian nuclear programme challenges the stability of the region and the international non-proliferation regime. A nuclear-armed Iran is not acceptable.

The E3+3 and Iran have expressed their willingness to engage in talks. We want, and we work for, a political and diplomatic solution. There is still time for diplomacy. Irrespective of the nuclear issue, we will not forget how the Iranian regime has failed to respond the legitimate demands of its people.

In Yemen, the election of President Al-Hadi marks an important milestone in the political transition. I visited Sana'a two days ago. Yemen continues to face tremendous challenges, but it is in a much better situation today than it was a year ago. Today, there is a genuine chance to achieve national reconciliation. The people of Yemen deserve our full support.

We are all grateful for the peaceful transfer of power. The Gulf Cooperation Council played a key role. So did the Security Council and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Those joint efforts made the Yemeni-led transition process possible. In many regards, the case of Yemen may serve as a model for political transition and for conflict resolution for this Council.

This week marks an anniversary for the beginning of peaceful protests in Syria. From the start, Germany has called for the Security Council to act. There has been much discussion on Syria in the Chamber, but the Council has failed to live up to its responsibility. Peaceful protest has been put down with horrific violence and murder. Among the 8,000 dead,

there are hundreds of children. That violence must end, and it must end now.

We have been watching with admiration the growing number of Syrians who risk life and limb every day for a better future. The people in Syria overcome fear every day, in the face of overwhelming repression and violence. Their courage arises from both hope and despair. Let us here in the Security Council give them more reason for hope than for despair.

Germany has been working tirelessly for a political solution. We must prevent further escalation. Too much time has been wasted. We see three priorities: first, an end to violence; secondly, immediate and unhindered access for humanitarian aid; and thirdly, a process of peaceful transition led by the Syrians and based on the decisions of the Arab League.

It is my firm conviction that only the Syrian people themselves can decide their future. They have been expressing their will throughout the past 12 months, and no one can doubt their desire for change. We extend our hand to all those working for peaceful and democratic change, in particular the Syrian National Council. In a new Syria, all Syrians must be able to enjoy their full rights regardless of affiliation, ethnicity, belief or gender.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Arab League, Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan, High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay, and Ms. Valerie Amos for their untiring efforts. Germany will continue to push for action in the Council, in other United Nations bodies, in the European Union and with like-minded partners in the Group of Friends of the Syrian People. Sending a strong signal and taking effective action is what we owe to the people of Syria. We owe it to the people, to the children, to the families, and to the victims. Upon it depends the credibility of the Council; it is the only way the Council can live up to its responsibility under the Charter.

Mr. Menan (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by thanking the United Kingdom for having organized today's debate, which provides us with a special opportunity to consider the situation in the Middle East through the prism of the demands of the people and the changes taking place there. I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and *welcome the presence of Ministers* who, by travelling

here today, have demonstrated the importance they attribute to the matter before us.

A little more than a year ago, reacting to a police officer's action that could be described as unremarkable, a young Tunisian chose to set himself on fire in order to express his anger, or rather his despair, at continuing to live in a society where inequality was increasingly prevalent and where shameless displays of wealth existed side by side with rampant poverty.

That act was the trigger for the far-reaching change that is shaking several Arab States. In fact, it was a revolution comparable to the French Revolution of 1789, which Hegel described as a splendid dawn. From Tunisia to Bahrain, from Egypt to Libya to Yemen and Syria, young people rose up with a single voice to demand more justice, more equality and a better distribution of the wealth of their countries. They were asking, in a word, for democracy.

Surprised by the scope of the unprecedented rebellion, some Heads of State were forced out of power. However, that was not enough to re-establish calm because, in reality, the aim of the youth movement was the establishment of a new democratic society. While a leader may be ousted in a few months, establishing such a democratic society requires more time and greater sacrifices.

The challenges of the current situation in the Middle East are legion, but they also provide major opportunities for the peoples of the region. The challenges involve rebuilding countries where justice, equality and human rights will now be the cornerstones. From that point of view, re-establishing peace, security and national unity are the first challenges to be met. The situation is complicated further by the uncontrolled movement of weapons, the emergence of armed militias, acts of vengeance and the settlement of accounts, refusal to disarm — all of which exacerbate insecurity and the lack of stability in the countries and regions involved.

Another challenge to be met is the humanitarian. In countries where revolution has taken place, thousands of people have had to flee their homes and seek refuge in the interior of their countries or in neighbouring countries. The situation calls for emergency humanitarian aid, which is not always easy to mobilize or deploy in isolated areas where access is difficult. This is where the concept of the responsibility

to protect comes in. The concept must be clearly defined so that it may be implemented in situations where human rights are violated on a massive scale.

Beyond those challenges, it must be said that the convulsions in the Arab world offer opportunities. These include, most importantly, freedom of expression, the ability of people to choose their leaders, and the participation of all stakeholders in society in the management of public affairs. The revolutions in the Middle East remind us of the importance of establishing good economic and political governance to foster development.

Because such revolutions arise from unemployment among highly educated and trained young people, uncontrolled poverty, soaring commodity prices, the failures of systems of justice, the abuse of power and corruption, they offer opportunities to the new leaders of the countries in question and elsewhere to position the human being at the heart of development. They must work in a spirit of openness and complementarity in order to create conditions conducive to development.

However, new democratic countries and those on the way to becoming democratic cannot rebuild alone. They must be assisted with substantial economic aid that can help them to offer their societies a new way of life in which young people no longer have to resort to acts of despair. Indeed, building democratic societies must go hand in hand with better living conditions for people. The claims of the people of the Arab world have now become part of history. Like any impetus for freedom, they are a wager, and like any wager, they must be well supported.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for having organized today's ministerial-level discussion of the challenges confronting the Middle East and the opportunities being offered to its peoples to live in dignity, peace, stability, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. We also welcome the attendance and participation of Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon in today's meeting.

The changes that the Arab region has seen recently have launched a new era in which the peoples of the region have regained their ability to control their destiny, influence political decision-making and contribute to building their present and their future. The changes have been diverse in scope, depth and

methodology. They have engendered many advantages and gains, the most important of which is the birth of genuine hope that the past has been overcome and that a future awaits in which all sectors and strata of society shall participate in the building of institutions that respect the will of people and involve them in the founding of democracy.

No one should underestimate the challenges facing the Middle East. In discussing those challenges, we cannot fail to tackle the crisis that has cast a dark shadow across the entire region and has dangerously escalated in recent days. The greatest and most dangerous threat to the stability and security of the Middle East is embodied in the policy of occupation and settlement that Israel continues to espouse, in violation of international legitimacy, signed agreements and the founding principles of the peace process.

The dead end reached in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, despite repeated international efforts, and Israel's continued acceleration of its settlement activities, especially in Jerusalem, the construction of the wall and the siege of the Gaza Strip have bred frustration and despair that threaten the security and stability of the entire region. The immediate and urgent challenge facing the Security Council is the creation of openings to resume negotiations and moving them towards a just and comprehensive solution, which it must seek to achieve as soon as possible.

The international community, and particularly influential States thereof, has a big and decisive role to play in influencing the parties and activating the two-State solution in the context of a just, comprehensive and full peace that would guarantee the emergence of a viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the entrenchment of peace and security for peoples throughout the region, without exception.

In the Arab Maghreb region, a new dawn has broken over sisterly Tunisia and the wheel of change has turned towards democracy and a State of legal institutions, with the participation of all sectors of society. Tunisia has become a new and active participant in building the Arab Maghreb coalition that we all desire.

As for sisterly Libya, and regardless of the difficulties and challenges facing its Arab Maghreb people in their transition, no one can deny that the Libyan people are now much better off than they have

been at any time during the past 40 years. They are now endowed with the resolve, resources and skills that will allow Libya to turn a new leaf in its modern history and build a democratic State that is unified and consolidated. The Libyan people have emerged victorious and liberated, thanks not only to the courage and resolve they displayed in trying times, but also to the unwavering and timely support of the international community, and especially the League of Arab States and the Security Council.

It is with great optimism and determination to overcome all obstacles that the brotherly Egyptian people are moving forward through a series of transformations endorsed by their national forces. We trust that the genius and history of that people will enable them to resolve all difficulties and to achieve their aspirations to liberty, democracy and social justice.

In that regard, we welcome the peaceful approach adopted by sisterly Yemen in order to ensure the organized transfer of power pursuant to the successful implementation of the initiative of the Arab Gulf countries, with United Nations assistance.

At the same time, we regret the tragedy endured by the brotherly Syrian people over the past year, which threatens to erupt into a civil war with unwelcome consequences. Morocco welcomes the appointment of Mr. Kofi Annan as Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the Arab League. We hope that his efforts will contribute to halting the violence, facilitating humanitarian access, and laying the necessary groundwork for launching a national dialogue with a view to implementing the Arab resolutions and guaranteeing the territorial integrity and unity of sisterly Syria. Morocco reiterates that the Council must speak with one voice in addressing the situation by implementing the relevant resolutions of the Arab League.

The reforms launched in Morocco more than 10 years ago under the leadership of His Majesty Mohammed VI have given historic momentum to the drive towards democracy and the democratic progress that the Kingdom has already achieved. They have also contributed to creating more individual and collective freedoms. On the basis of strictly internal dynamics born of national political resolve, Morocco has adopted important measures, including profound constitutional reforms, and held transparent elections leading to the

formation of a new Government committed to combating corruption, reforming the judiciary and focusing on the enhancement of women's role in all fields. We are ready to continue sharing our experience with our brethren in all fields of endeavour, including political pluralism, the role of civil society and capacity-building in the service of a State of law and order.

Whatever its internal capacities, no State of our region can stand along against the challenges of terrorism, secession and development, or guarantee openness and democracy. Any national effort and outcome will therefore be limited if not complemented and nourished by regional cooperation based on shared history, current needs, and aspirations to a common future. Such cooperation would strengthen the people of the region, enabling them to achieve economic integration to the benefit of all States. That is what we hope to accomplish in the Arab Maghreb region, which has seen positive and unprecedented movement in recent months that is cause for optimism. We will work tirelessly to maintain these dynamics in order to confront many of the challenges we continue to face and the dangerous threats to our security and territorial integrity. We hope that these efforts will enjoy the active support of all countries of the region.

In closing, no one can underestimate the difficulties and obstacles to be surmounted in achieving the objectives of democratic transition. Similarly, no one should underestimate the energy of the Arab peoples or their ability to overcome these challenges, each according to its own specificities, historical assets, and particular experience. The road towards strengthening and building democracy is long and wearisome and calls for wisdom and foresight in entrenching the foundations of stability, without which true democratic institutions and structures cannot be established. The international community has a great responsibility and role to play in guaranteeing the success of these efforts and in offering support and encouragement of all kinds throughout every stage of democratic transition. We hope that the international community will not disappoint the peoples who are waiting for and aspiring to that transition.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the presence of Mr. William Hague, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, to preside over today's

meeting. I also wish to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his statement.

The situation in the Middle East is undergoing unprecedented changes. In some countries the situation is turbulent. That has of course caused widespread concern throughout the world. Developments in the situation in the Middle East have a major impact on world political and economic affairs. Without stability and development in that region, the recovery of the world economy will remain elusive and world peace will remain in serious jeopardy.

At a time when the consequences of the international economic and financial crisis are still being felt, the people of the Middle East and North Africa, like the people of other regions of the world, also have demands for change and for the safeguarding of their self-interests. The reasons for the turbulence and changes in the Middle East and North Africa are multifaceted. In order to properly address those changes, we must engage in rational thinking and adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensure the peace and stability of the region, in order that the people's demands will be met in a better and more orderly fashion.

I should like to focus on four points. First, we must respect the desires and demands of the peoples of the countries concerned for change and development, as well as respect their ownership over the management of their internal affairs and selecting their political systems and routes to development. The primary responsibility for resolving issues in the Middle East lies with the people of the Middle East themselves. They are the masters of their own destiny.

Secondly, we hope that countries of the region will express their political aspirations through legal and non-violent means, resolve their differences through dialogue, consultation and other peaceful means, and achieve proper solutions through inclusive political processes. We call on all parties to avoid violence and military conflict and to restore stability and normal social order as soon as possible.

Thirdly, we must adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms governing international relations, and respect the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the countries of the region. The international community can provide necessary constructive assistance for the efforts of countries to

solve their internal crises through political means. China is against any attempt by external forces to engage in military intervention or push for regime change. Sanctions or the threat thereof are not conducive to a proper solution of these problems.

Fourthly, Security Council resolutions must be strictly and comprehensively implemented. No party is to interpret them in any way it wants, let alone take action that exceeds Council mandates. The protection of civilians must follow international humanitarian law and other related international law, without any political motivations or purposes. China is against any interference in internal affairs in the name of humanitarianism.

As always, China remains firmly committed to just Arab causes, including the just demands of the Palestinian people for the restoration of their legitimate national rights. China supports the establishment of a Palestinian State on the basis of the 1967 borders, with full sovereignty and independence, with East Jerusalem as its capital and with eventual peaceful coexistence between the two countries of Palestine and Israel.

The peace process in the Middle East is currently at a stalemate. There was another increase in tension in Gaza last week. China is deeply worried about that development. Any stagnation or setback to the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks can only bring about more turbulence and conflict. The more conflict there is and the more grim the situation becomes, the more that the international community should intensify its diplomatic efforts and push for an early resumption of talks between the two parties. China appreciates the efforts made by the Middle East Quartet. We support a greater role by Mr. Annan in achieving peace in the Middle East.

China recently put forward a six-point proposal for a solution to the Syrian issue. We call on the Syrian Government and all parties concerned to cease all violence, immediately launch an inclusive political dialogue, and adopt through consultations, and put into practice as soon as possible, a detailed and comprehensive reform road map and time frame. The parties concerned in the international community must respect Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, and create conditions for talks among the Syrian political parties.

The crisis in Syria is very complex. Political mediation efforts will not succeed overnight. But we

must persevere with tireless efforts. To that end, China has repeatedly deployed special envoys to engage with Syrian parties and to push for political talks.

China supports a constructive role by United Nations-League of Arab States Joint Special Envoy Annan in finding a political solution to the Syrian crisis. We support the vigorous efforts by Arab countries and the Arab League in promoting a political settlement in the Syrian crisis. We value and welcome Mr. Annan's recent visit to Syria. We call on the international community to create and support favourable conditions for Mr. Annan's good offices.

No Chinese self-interests are involved on the issue of Syria. We do not favour any particular party, nor do we go out our way to oppose any party. China adheres to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respects Syrian's sovereignty and the choices of the Syrian people. No external parties should engage in military intervention in Syria or push for regime change.

China supports a leading role by the United Nations in coordinating humanitarian relief to help to alleviate the humanitarian situation in some regions of Syria. Through the International Committee of the Red Cross, China will provide \$2 million in emergency humanitarian relief to the Syrian people.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, China stands ready to shoulder its full responsibilities, engage in patient and full consultation with all sides on an equal basis, and push for an early political settlement of the Syrian crisis.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): Let me begin by welcoming you, Foreign Secretary Hague, and the other Ministers to the Security Council. I would like to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for organizing today's debate to discuss developments in West Asia and North Africa over the past year. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, you Mr. President, and the other speakers for the valuable statements made here today. We have listened carefully to the views expressed and hope that today's deliberations will help the international community to develop a more coordinated and consensual outlook to the serious challenges posed by developments in the region and beyond.

For more than a millennium now, societies in West Asia and North Africa have played an important

role in world history. By virtue of the genius of their peoples, their strategic location and, more recently, their natural resources, those societies have attracted considerable interest from far and wide. Over centuries, countries in the region have built multifaceted socio-economic and strategic linkages with the rest of world. Developments in the region have implications within and beyond the region, and they naturally are of interest to the international community.

The relationship between India and the Arab world is unique, with age-old historic and cultural connections. The impact of the Arab and Islamic world on India itself has been profound and far-reaching, giving rise to a composite culture that is rich in its diversity and enduring in its essential unity. The region is home to over 6 million Indians, with some of our largest economic and trade linkages. It is also the most important source for our energy needs and, being in our extended neighbourhood, vitally important to India.

The unrest in West Asia and North Africa, which began more than a year ago, has its roots in the desire of people to play a greater role in shaping their destiny, politically and economically. Those aspirations will not be met through violence or armed struggle, and a solution cannot be reached through prescriptions from outside. In fact, given the history of foreign interference, such prescriptions will not only be suspect in the eyes of various segments of society, but may also have the potential to exacerbate the problem.

In dealing with developments in West Asia and North Africa, the international community needs to use all the tools of diplomacy at its disposal and be there to assist the concerned countries in transitioning to an inclusive and participatory polity while maintaining social stability and cohesion. Since the exact nature of grievances varies from country to country, there is no one set of measures that can be applied to all of them. The solutions of the problems in each country have to take into consideration the society's particular circumstances and the genius of its people. However, what is certain is that solutions cannot include intervention through military force or arming the civilian population. Such a course of action will only fuel further bloodshed and instability and create new marginalized groups. It also risks breeding extremism and intolerance, whose adverse consequences will be felt in the region and beyond.

I would like to recall that the Father of the Indian nation, Mahatma Gandhi, said that "non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind". Even during the course of the past year, we have seen that wherever changes have taken place without violence, not only has normalcy returned faster but the changes have been accepted by society as a whole. We are therefore of the considered view that the political leaders of the concerned countries in West Asia and North Africa should resolve their problems through inclusive internal political processes that meet the aspirations of their people, in an atmosphere free of violence and bloodshed. The principles of national sovereignty, political independence and territorial unity and integrity must be respected.

The international community should — including through the auspices of the United Nations — use diplomatic leverage and make available technical assistance in fields such as political, security and justice sector reforms, the drafting of new constitutions and legal frameworks, electoral institutions and the conduct of elections, among others. Actions based on selective or partial interpretations of a mandate of the United Nations must be avoided to ensure that long-term political reconciliation is achieved among various sections of society through peaceful, inclusive political processes.

The international community also needs to be galvanized to expeditiously resolve the long-pending problem of the West Asian and North African region, namely, the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Israeli-Palestinian problem. That problem cannot be allowed to be lost in the din and preoccupations of other developments in the region. Quite apart from the fact that without a resolution of that conflict, developments in West Asia and North Africa cannot be adequately addressed, we seriously run the risk of violence if the people of Palestine feel marginalized and sense a complete loss of attention to their plight. Their protests may get radicalized unless concrete action is taken to end the occupation of Arab lands, so that all peoples in the region can live in peace in their respective homelands and build cooperative relations. Moreover, the call of the international community for democratic and political reforms sounds hollow to Palestinians and other people in the region living under occupation. In that connection, some important and immediate measures need to be taken, including putting an end to all settlement activities and favourable consideration

by this Council of the Palestinian application for membership in the Organization.

As the world's largest democracy, India supports measures taken by the countries in the region to address the grievances of their people in an atmosphere free of violence and bloodshed. India stands ready to share its experiences with the concerned countries in building democratic and plural political institutions and to partner with them in such fields as the drafting of new constitutional and legal frameworks, judicial and security sector reforms, the creation of impartial and independent electoral institutions for the conduct of elections, and human resource development, including training and technical assistance.

India will continue to support the Council in meeting the challenge of assisting the countries of West Asia and North Africa in implementing required political reforms without recourse to violence or violations of fundamental human rights, and in building an inclusive political system that enables the participation of all people. Only that will create long-term peace, security and stability within the region and beyond.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): South Africa expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his briefing to the Council. We thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for organizing this important debate. It is indeed important that we reflect on the momentous events that have resulted in significant political changes in the Arab world. More importantly, this is an opportunity to share ideas on how to deal with those countries that are still embroiled in conflicts and those that are going through a post-conflict phase. The year 2011 will forever be ingrained in the memory of the world as the year of Arab uprisings, characterized by, inter alia, mass protests and armed insurgencies.

Our assessment of the uprisings in the Arab States, many created as colonial constructs resulting from the Sykes-Picot Agreement, shows that those protests, were, among other things, a cry for political emancipation from decades of totalitarianism, a cry for proportionate distribution of wealth and power, and a call for participation in democratic processes, including governance, and access to economic opportunities.

It is clear that the patience of those peoples, who had lived under repressive regimes for many years, had

been tested to the maximum. Indeed, the social contract in those societies had broken down irretrievably. The Arab Spring is a clear indication of how much the people of those countries yearn for freedom, democracy and other basic human rights.

The five volumes of the United Nations Development Programme's *Arab Human Development Report* provide relevant insights into the causes and the warnings of the Arab revolutions. The first edition, published in 2002, noted that the freedom deficit in the Arab world undermined human development and was one of the most painful manifestations of lagging political development.

Subsequently, seven years later, the 2009 edition further noted that approximately 30 per cent of young people in Arab countries were unemployed, that more than 50 per cent of the population was under the age of 24, and that 51 million new jobs needed to be created by 2020 in order to avoid an increase in the unemployment rate. Those and other similar reports should have raised alarms in the Arab world and compelled Governments to realize that the socio-economic and development needs of the people — particularly young people — needed to be addressed. The fact that most if not all of the uprisings were initiated by young people should not be surprising.

Obviously, in today's rapidly globalizing and integrated world, the turmoil in the Arab world does not only affect Arab peoples and is not limited to the Arab world. The rest of the world has been affected in many ways, including through rising oil prices, the growing number of refugees, the rise in the number of illegal weapons, and increased tensions between nations. Given the umbilical cord that connects Africa to the Arab world, the African continent has been adversely affected as a result of the undesirable spillover effects of the Arab revolutions. In that regard, we humbly offer the following thoughts for consideration.

First, South Africa strongly believes that it is essential that Governments should respect the will of the people. It is therefore essential that the peoples of the region gain the opportunity to determine their future. That can happen only if the systems established reflect the aspirations of the people of the various countries in the region, including of women and youth.

Secondly, security and development are interlinked. As the Security Council acknowledged in

its presidential statement of February 2011 (S/PRST/2011/4), development can no longer be divorced from deliberations and interventions that are traditionally security-related. The Council also recognized that that is an essential element of its work in the maintenance of international peace and security. We emphasize that that does not necessarily mean that the Council has to usurp developmental functions undertaken by other bodies within the United Nations system, but rather that it should take social and development issues into account in relevant deliberations within its Charter mandate. Given the nature of the developments in the Middle East and North Africa in the past year, more focus should be placed on the relevant developmental challenges that the people of that region face.

Thirdly, South Africa reiterates its view that the Council should strengthen its conflict prevention mechanisms by elaborating a comprehensive prevention strategy. At the centre of that strategy should be the strengthening of the United Nations and regional early warning apparatus. In our view, it is vital that developmental aspects should also be integrated into our efforts at conflict prevention, resolution, management and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Fourthly, related to what I have just mentioned, partnerships with international financial institutions, in particular the World Bank and regional development structures, are critical in buttressing peace efforts in countries in transition. Equally, we emphasize the importance of context-specific and nationally owned interventions.

Fifthly, as those countries transition into democracy, there is a need to address the wrongs of the past through efforts aimed at reconciliation and transitional justice. Reconciliation efforts should be undertaken and supported by the Council. We would warn against prescribing how such efforts should be undertaken, as each conflict is unique, but the international community should support the people of the region in that important area.

Related to reconciliation efforts is the need to ensure adherence to the rule of law. In January, the Council emphasized the need for universal adherence to, and implementation of, the rule of law, and that the promotion of the rule of law and justice was an indispensable element for peaceful coexistence (see S/PV.6705). The discussions underscored the

inextricable link between the promotion of justice and the attainment of peace in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Lastly, we should warn that it is not in the interests of international peace and security for the international community, including the Security Council, to use the plight of the Arab peoples to pursue self-interest and execute regime change. As the United Nations, we should abide by the same international law of which we purport to be the master protagonists. Therefore, the United Nations itself and countries implementing its mandates should at all times adhere to international law.

In dealing with those many challenges, it is important that we work together with regional and subregional organizations, which, more often than not, have the relevant insights into the dynamics of a given conflict and often what solutions to employ. We have seen such collaboration produce positive results recently in Yemen, and we hope that it will equally assist with respect to the situation in Syria.

Whereas the Arab Spring has brought a glimmer of hope to many in the Arab world, it has unfortunately left some of the long-standing issues of human rights abuses and colonization unresolved. In that regard, we are reminded of the plight of the people of Western Sahara and Palestine, who still yearn for freedom despite the seismic political and economic shifts that have engulfed the region.

In conclusion, the observation of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the current envoy to Syria, remains valid today when he stated that:

"We will not enjoy development without security, or security without development. We will not enjoy either without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed."

Flowing from those words, we offer our support to the peoples of the Arab world as they chart a better future for themselves. We hope that, at the centre of our efforts to improve the lives of those peoples, we will be guided by the notion of creating an environment within which citizens can live in harmony, fulfil themselves and enjoy life in greater freedom.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to thank the United Kingdom for convening this debate on the situation in the Middle East. We

welcome His Excellency Secretary of State William Hague, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the other distinguished participants in this very important meeting.

Finding a point of departure for discussions on the pending challenges that the Middle Eastern societies have found themselves facing, and extrapolating on prospective opportunities ensuing from those challenges, could be an onerous task. Suffice it to say that the wave of changes that has encompassed the region since last year has dramatically altered the security situation and the political and societal status quo in many Middle Eastern societies and beyond. The upheavals that set some countries of the region on the path of transformation have fundamentally reshaped the typical set of features that once characterized the region.

The changes reflect the natural aspirations of people for greater freedom and wider political participation. Against that backdrop, the will and tenacity of people to write their own future within democratic States, with functioning State institutions and respect for the rule of law and human rights, should be commended and supported. We believe that consistency and incessant efforts will lead to the achievement of targeted objectives.

At the same time, in spite of the promises brought by the process of democratic transition, one should not forget that it is an extremely responsible stage in the history of the Middle East that demands the highest vigilance and laborious work in order to rule out miscalculations and unpredictability as to the region's future. The method of violence as a means of achieving political objectives is not itself a democracy, which cannot be propagated by the sword and imposed from outside. Any process within either an individual State or a region as a whole should be built on a sound legitimate basis, while progressive economic and democratic development should be an objective for all Governments. Azerbaijan commends the reconciliation efforts of the national authorities in a number of countries of the Middle East to find negotiated and effective solutions, with the participation of all strata and political forces of their societies.

We regret seeing the lack of progress in the Middle East peace process. At the same time, Azerbaijan commends and highly values the consistent

efforts of Jordan to revive the dialogue and resume the negotiations towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution.

Azerbaijan is deeply concerned about the continuing illegal settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories. Apart from the impact on the rights, freedoms and everyday lives of the Palestinians, settlements cause serious damage to the peace process and, more dangerously, threaten a two-State solution and the emergence of a viable Palestinian State.

In that regard, I would like to stress once again that, in contrast to some other well-known situations involving groundless and illegitimate territorial claims, including those under the concocted pretext of care for ethnic minority groups, the right to self-determination and statehood of the people of Palestine has been recognized.

With respect to the occupied Palestinian territories and similar situations in other parts of the world, we proceed from the importance of reaffirming the continuing applicability of all relevant international legal norms, achieving the invalidation of activities aimed at the consolidation of military occupations, initiating urgent measures towards removing the adverse effects of such activities and discouraging any further practices of the same or a similar nature.

The Security Council cannot remain indifferent to situations involving serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and, in performing its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, must react adequately in order to put an end to illegal practices and policies and to ensure that human rights and fundamental freedoms are observed and respected. It is also important to fully utilize the advantage of cultural diversity through promoting inter-communal dialogue and reconciliation, while categorically rejecting and invalidating any manifestation of ethnic and religious intolerance.

The situation in Syria remains worrisome, with rampant violence and human rights abuses that have resulted in increasing the civilian death toll. We are of the strong view that the only solution to the crisis in Syria is through an all-inclusive and Syrian-led political process, where all national stakeholders demonstrate determination to solve the crisis peacefully. Azerbaijan encourages all parties in Syria to fully cooperate with the Joint Special Envoy of the

United Nations and the League of Arab States, Mr. Kofi Annan. We hope that his mission will contribute to ending violence and facilitating a peaceful solution.

As has been pointed out during this debate, repression does not deliver stability, peace or security, and Governments that suppress basic freedoms will always be unstable. As a country that suffers from prolonged occupation of its territories and the resulting massive population displacement, Azerbaijan believes that the same understanding should apply equally to inter-State relations. The behaviour of Governments that resort to force to capture the territory of another sovereign State and authorize attacks on civilians and ethnic cleansing cannot be tolerated. It is of paramount importance that the international community unite its efforts and speak with one voice to reject repressive policies in inter-State relations, overcome mutual mistrust and double standards, and achieve the uniform application of international law and democratization of international relations.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Please pass on, Mr. President, to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mr. William Hague, how much we appreciated him being with us here today for the debate, as well as to the other Ministers for Foreign Affairs who came to be with us. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia was not able, for unexpected reasons, to participate as she had intended to. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his interesting analysis of the subject at hand, which illustrates very well how things are developing.

Several common features can be found in what has happened during the past year in countries of the Middle East and North Africa, events that are part of what we have been calling the Arab Spring: a primarily young population, affected by high rates of unemployment and exclusive political systems that are not able to adequately represent the interests of the various sectors of society. We must also add the impact of new information technologies on the cohesion and leadership of popular movements. Under those conditions, where profound inequities and political, economic and social exclusion converge, a process aimed at transforming the prevailing order emerges and seeks economic and political changes and alternatives, allowing participation and the opening of new spaces

and means of expression, which imply, in short, demands for fundamental rights.

Notwithstanding those common elements, the transformations and processes have followed very different courses in the various countries of the region, and this is why we need to analyse each case on its own merits. The response of the international community to the challenges and opportunities that arise from that process have been centred around prevention and the cessation of violence and violent repression against civilian populations crying out to have their fundamental human rights and freedoms respected. That includes the freedoms of election and association, the recognition of the rights of women and gender equality, the rights of minorities, as well as access to economic opportunities.

In a region that is as complex as it is vital for the maintenance of international peace and security, the authorities encounter major difficulties and limitations in their response to the demands and expectations of a population eager for reforms. In order to overcome a past of authoritarianism and sectarianism, it is not enough to simply hold periodic elections. There needs to be a gradual establishment of political parties, a strengthening of civil society organizations and ideological pluralism, free access to information and the exercise of fundamental freedoms and human rights. That requires time for learning and the decisive support of the international community for national efforts. The transition towards societies that are more democratic and representative requires the convergence and participation of all sectors of society around common principles and purposes. Sound and suitable institutional arrangements are required in order to channel the various social demands and, at the same time, avoid polarization, while building the institutions and legal framework that will encompass relations between citizens and their Governments.

The international community is astonished to see how disproportionate force is being used against the civilian population in Syria. Systematic violations of fundamental freedoms and human rights have been witnessed, and extremes have been reached that must be qualified as crimes against humanity. That is unacceptable and must be categorically condemned, particularly by the Security Council, using the means that it has at its disposal.

Colombia has resolutely supported and participated in the efforts of the international community aimed at putting an end to this unheard of situation and all forms of violence and violations of human rights and at promoting a transition to a democratic and pluralistic system. In order to avoid situations such as this the Security Council should stress the use of the instruments of preventive diplomacy that it has at its disposal in order to reduce the threats posed by armed conflicts and their associated human costs. We must use all the peaceful means available to us to protect civilians from violence, in accordance with the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations and in full respect for the principles of territorial integrity, national unity, sovereignty and the political independence of States.

The Council must maintain close cooperation with regional organizations and give priority to strategies aimed at preventing conflicts through mediation and good offices. The League of Arab States, the African Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Gulf Cooperation Council have a privileged position, with unique access to key players and with knowledge and experience of the situation in the region that are exceptional, and their participation as strategic partners is, therefore, key for developing actions that are appropriate for the particular circumstances and needs of each country of the region. My country naturally gives all of its support to the actions of those organizations.

Our support and that of the international community in such situations will be more effective and sustainable if we are able to recognize political and cultural contexts and if the Governments and peoples continue working together towards consolidating the progress achieved. The spontaneous movement that is the Arab Spring opens the way for the progressive establishment of States and Governments based on respect and the genuine implementation of democratic principles and the rule of law. Those recently formed Governments should anchor their legitimacy in respect for the rights of the population, the provision of basic social services, the generation of employment and the creation of conditions promoting sustainable economic development, the benefits of which will be a tangible reality for all citizens without distinction.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Mr. William Hague and the

Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom for convening today's high-level debate. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the Secretary-General and the honourable Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the United States, France, Russia, Germany, Guatemala and Portugal.

Sitting in this Chamber today, Sir, I shall start off by referring to your distinguished compatriot in Cambridge, Mr. Stephen Hawking, and his fraternity who are with him in surveying the universe, and specifically in demarcating dark space/spaces. Those dark spaces constitute the vast majority of the universe today, and in this Chamber today I have witnessed those spaces in many long diatribes in which so much has been said and yet not said. Hawking has cautioned all of us that the dark spaces that constitute the vast majority of the universe are not dormant spaces. The majority of those vast spaces will one day unleash their silent fury, and he cautions us to be prepared. I believe that we should be so prepared with respect to so much that we do not say, or dare to say, in this house today.

In North Africa and the Middle East, under discussion today, we have witnessed important developments. My country firmly believes in the fulfilment of the aspirations of the people and their rights to be masters of their own destiny, to speak and to be heard, and to pursue their legitimate aspirations. No effort should be spared in accommodating those efforts. We therefore strongly condemn the use of force against peaceful protestors, as well as violations of human rights wherever they occur and irrespective of who the perpetrators may be, as a matter of principle.

As one of the bigger democratic countries, we are firmly committed to the ideals, values and principles of the United Nations and believe that the legitimate aspirations of people should be accommodated peacefully, without external interference and in a matter consistent with the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of States.

Today, in support of those embattled societies, I again urge the Council to please remember that no movement in the world, including the great revolutions, has succeeded without external help. They cannot be stroked out with a pen. Anyone who seeks to rationalize a principled position by riding the high horse of morality very truly needs to narrow the distances by treading slowly on what might be referred to as lowly grounds.

But the support that we extend to the legitimate wishes of people has to be within the confines of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States and supporting such concepts as regime change are alien to the ethos of international good-neighbourliness.

The changes in the region under discussion today have often been referred to as the Arab Spring. The concept of spring evokes images of rebirth, change, renewal, warmth and beauty. It should have an air of tranquillity and harmony about it. More than anything else, it is a natural process than can neither be forced nor be abrupt. This has to be understood. Winter evolves into spring and spring brings an end to winter's hardness. That natural process of evolution must therefore be allowed to take its course uninterrupted. So we welcome change when it is locally led, peaceful and an expression of the aspirations of the people. Solutions to problems have to be found by the people themselves and not, I repeat, not imposed from outside.

The Foreign Minister of Jordan, Mr. Nasser Judeh, made a remarkable statement on 29 February to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament that I keep going back to time and time again. He told the Committee that there can be no complete Arab Spring or Arab awakening without peace in the Middle East. And there will never be peace in the Middle East without a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This, then, is the context of my speech — the winter of Arab discontent. Can we usher in a vast spring with that winter consistently raising its head? I do not think so. The denial of the Palestinian right to self-determination is at the heart of unrest in the region. If peace in the Middle East is to be lasting, progress on the Syria-Israel and Lebanon-Israel conflicts is necessary as well. Israel must withdraw completely from the occupied Lebanese lands and the occupied Syrian Golan, in compliance with relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

With the continuation of Israeli settlement activity, hope for the Palestinians to have a viable State of their own is fading fast. We have had grim reminders of that delivered to the Council in the recent briefings by representatives of the Department of Political Affairs and a number of Member States. There is a general belief that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory is becoming increasingly volatile. Given such factors as the ever-increasing settlement

activity and settler violence, the continued blockade of the Gaza Strip, diminished economic prospects for the population, vandalization of the holy sites, the plight of Palestinian prisoners, and so on, it is understandable that the people should be on tenterhooks. A small spark could turn into a big fire.

We also condemn any pipe bombs being fired from the Gaza Strip, but we believe that the biggest threat to international peace and security arises from one particular aspect. Yet the Council continues to do nothing cogent for the Palestinians. Each time that Council members meet, we are told that the Quartet is now discussing the matter. I await the day that the Quartet will produce a result that will substantially change the plight of these people.

One of the best things to do, and we have so moved, is that if it is agreed that Gaza should be given provisions, we should take a flotilla, land on the beaches and deliver to the inhabitants, through the United Nations, the security and the food that they require. We strongly feel that now is as appropriate a time as any to send a strong, unified signal to the occupying Power to stop its activities, specifically in land-grabbing.

There continuously arises a matter here that I would like to dispel once and for all. I may or may not succeed. It is basically that, whenever anyone queries whether Islam and democracy are incompatible, the answer is that they are not incompatible. Only Huntington really believes that they are incompatible. I believe that it is a question of time even there. But I would like to say very emphatically that our prophet basically called all our brothers in Islam as brothers and asked them to share their surpluses as well as their shortcomings. In my opinion, there is no better manifestation of democracy. Furthermore, he asked Muslims to reach out to the world in peace. For reasons of learning, he told them to go to China, which was not a Muslim brother State. That does not matter. It shows the vastness of the vision of the person of the prophet. When he found that things were not good for Muslims in Mecca, where he started out, he told them to go to the brotherly king of Ethiopia, who happened to be a Christian, and said that he would look after them. That vast outreach shows the beauty of what is already available. We need not confer too much distinction on Huntington.

I will conclude this segment by reiterating our support for the Palestinian people in their just struggle for peace and the right to self-determination and their membership, as was said by my Indian colleague, in the United Nations at the earliest. We feel that Palestine will remain the biggest challenge of the Middle East. That opportunity is being afforded by this wave of fulfilment of aspirations in the name of the people of the Middle East through the Arab Spring. I feel that the Palestinians should also benefit, and not lose. I reiterate that without resolution of this core issue, as was said by the Foreign Minister of Jordan, we will not be able to see real peace in the region.

I would also like to address five crucial points raised by the Secretary-General in his statement. I believe that those are crucial points, as he himself says.

He first speaks of leaders choosing the path of meaningful reform and says that people do not want cosmetic changes that give only the merest taste of democracy. I believe that a great American president, many years ago, spoke of the four freedoms. I believe that there must be a basic intent on the part of the United Nations for fundamental legislative action by the General Assembly and the Security Council with respect to the basic democratic requirements of statehood in which those freedoms should be enshrined. Everyone who wishes to be a Member here must at some stage be able to resolve and come to this particular aspect. I believe that just naming them as a pillar would not be enough; it would be important to have a minimum legislated induction into all the documents in the world where such elements such as promoting pluralism and the rights of minorities would be the minimum requirement.

We just celebrated International Women's Day. Women get that once a year and they happen to be a majority in the world. I feel that we have to rectify those matters first. We have to understand that women have a crucial role to play, without which we will never get anywhere.

I also take very strongly his third aspect, that women have stood in the squares and streets demanding change and now have the right to sit at the table with real influence in decision-making, and safe from violence, intimidation and abuse. That is happening even now in the Arab Spring. Last week, eight members of the Council met with women from Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, and

we heard those women and were shocked. One of the things they said, which I think we should support very strongly here, is that 25 per cent of all financing through the United Nations must be earmarked for delivery into the hands of women. Do not forget, they constitute 75 per cent of the world. Women end up feeding, clothing and looking after children, not only doing all the work but having to do it; yet they do not get the benefit of their husbands' employment, especially not in the Third World. In addition, 25 per cent of all delegations visiting, calling on or meeting with the United Nations should be made up of women. We need to make it necessary that they be part. They have made more sacrifices than anyone in this Spring, as we call it, so then let them be able to be a part of that complete change.

When we speak about the fourth pillar, opportunities for young people, there are 200 million more in Asia. I think that takes on an importance that cannot be denied.

There must be regional peace for the Palestinians. If there was a Balfour Declaration that brought the State of Israel to where it is today, then let us have a Balfour Declaration for the Palestinians as well.

In conclusion, in the context of world peace and the Middle East, I would like to stress that while we understand all sorts of needs arising on security, it would be better for that region and the whole world if

the situation of Iran could be stopped from moving towards conflict, because it will be the sort of conflict that might have a very unfortunate impact on the world and that might be the proverbial last straw that breaks the camel's back on world peace. I hope not. We understand the seriousness of it. We also hope that with the accumulated diplomacy here we can do better.

The President: The representative of Morocco has asked to take the floor to make a further brief statement.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I shall be very brief. Earlier, a delegation thought it was a good idea to refer to a situation that has absolutely nothing to do with today's debate. It made comparisons that are as baseless as they are inopportune. I intend neither to follow nor to entertain that attempt to disrupt our debate, much less to detract from the positive message of support and encouragement that we hope will emerge from this high-level meeting. That is our goal and should be the goal of all delegations. I would like each and every one of them to adhere to that premise and to contribute in a positive manner.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12:30 p.m.